UNITED NATIONS

Convention to Combat Desertification

Distr.
GENERAL

ICCD/COP(5)/3
20 August 2001

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES
Fifth session
Geneva, 1-12 October 2001
Item 7(a) of the provisional agenda

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CONVENTION

REVIEW OF THE REPORT OF THE SECRETARIAT ON PROGRESS MADE BY AFFECTED COUNTRY PARTIES IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CONVENTION

Note by the secretariat

CONTENTS

		Paragraphs	Page
I.	INTRODUCTION	1 - 15	2
II.	MEASURES TO SUPPORT IMPLEMENTATION IN AFRICA	16 - 18	5
III.	MEASURES TO SUPPORT IMPLEMENTATION IN ASIA	19 - 24	9
IV.	MEASURES TO SUPPORT IMPLEMENTATION IN LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN	56 - 66	12
V.	MEASURES TO SUPPORT IMPLEMENTATION IN THE NORTHERN MEDITERRANEAN AND CENTRAL EUROPEAN REGIONS	67 - 74	14
VI.	MEASURES TO SUPPORT IMPLEMENTATION AT THE INTERNATIONAL LEVEL	75 - 79	16
	Annex		
	Major national, subregional and regional meetings, held or planned, with secretariat involvement, June 2000 - December 2001		17

I. INTRODUCTION

1. At its fourth session, the Conference of the Parties (COP) reviewed ICCD/COP(4)/3, on activities relating to the implementation of the Convention, which the secretariat had supported, or in which the secretariat had participated, during the period from September 1999 to June 2000. Similar information on measures undertaken or planned by the secretariat for the period from June 2000 to September 2001, and preliminary information to the end of 2001, is contained in the present document.

2. This note contains only limited information on the implementation process. It is meant as a modest complement of information in the context of the comprehensive assessment made by the Parties and by concerned international and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) during the two sessions of the Ad Hoc Working Group (AHWG) on the review of implementation. The first segment of the AHWG took place during the fourth session of the Conference of the Parties (COP 4) in Bonn, Germany, in December 2000, and the second segment during the inter-sessional meeting held from 19 March to 6 April 2001 in Bonn. This report spells out only those specific activities of the Parties to which the secretariat brought its contribution through financial and/or technical support and through participation.

3. In many respects the AHWG represents a milestone in the early stage of the implementation process of the UNCCD. Indeed it represents the Parties' collective assessment of constraints, challenges and possible responses to discharging more effectively the obligation of all Parties under this instrument. The conclusions and concrete recommendations on further steps in the implementation of the Convention made by the Parties reflect a consensus, as they call for measures well within the reach of existing development institutions. They should permit the Conference of the Parties to give appropriate guidance in order to overcome the difficulties that have been identified. The following paragraphs contain the secretariat's tentative conclusions on the review process, on the basis of the report of the AHWG contained in document ICCD/COP(4)/AHWG/3.

4. Affected developing country Parties and developed country Parties alike agree that they must more decisively take up the challenge of mainstreaming the UNCCD in existing sustainable development strategies while preserving the identity of the process. Policy coherence and a more coordinated approach by international institutions should consequently be promoted through multilateral forums. Coordination at country level is a key step in achieving the required level of programme integration and establishing the overdue consultative mechanism for the conclusion of partnership arrangements. The lack of progress in mobilizing resources for those countries which have completed their NAPs is indeed seen as a severe bottleneck which calls for the immediate attention of COP 5.

5. In this context, the resident coordinators of the United Nations and the bilateral "chefs de file" are expected to facilitate the conclusion of country-driven partnership arrangements that would also reflect the priorities and needs of natural resources, and land users at the local level. In the aftermath of the Declaration on Commitments adopted at COP 4, significant recommendations were made for increasing the provision of funding for national, subregional and regional action programmes, notably through the Global Environment Facility and the renewed commitments of the members of the Facilitation Committee of the Global Mechanism.

6. While an appeal was reiterated for assistance to complete the formulation of the NAPs and a call made to provide the national focal points with the assistance needed, the Parties did not ignore the relevance of subregional and regional cooperation. The role of the regional thematic networks and other regional activities was recognized and Parties agreed that they should be strengthened, since they can play a supportive role. Such networks and activities can also contribute in a decentralized manner to implementing CST-driven initiatives.

7. Given the comprehensive nature of the report of the AGW3 contained in ICCD/COP(4)/AGW3/6, the secretariat will not elaborate beyond these comments since the report contains the conclusions of the review process as initially requested by decision 11/COP.1, paragraph 19. Likewise, the information on synthesis by each subregion required by decision 9/COP.3, paragraph 24, is contained in Part III on key aspects and trends of presentations of the report of the AGW3.

8. The Executive Secretary of the Convention is aware that, together with the Managing Director of the Global Mechanism, he is requested by decision 9/COP.4, paragraph 24, to prepare a guide to help affected developing country Parties in the convening of a consultative process leading to the conclusion of partnership arrangements. It is deemed that such a guide will be of greater service to the Parties if it can benefit from a critical mass of initial experiences, from the results of the review of the AGW3 report by COP 5 and from the pending developments of the Global Environment Facility with regard to access to finance for land degradation. In the meantime, in conformity with paragraphs 19 and 20 of the said decision, the Executive Secretary reports that a number of measures have been launched by the secretariat and the Global Mechanism to facilitate the conclusion of partnership agreements.

9. The consultative meeting on "Partnership Building and Resource Mobilization for the UNCCD Implementation in China, particularly in the western region" took place in Beijing from 8 to 10 June 2001 and included a field trip to Ningxia province. This was a joint undertaking of the Government of China, the Global Mechanism, the Asian Development Bank and the secretariat, and was meant to address, in the context of China's vast desertification challenge, some of the main issues raised at the AGW3. The meeting demonstrated a high level of preparation from the part of the central and provincial Chinese authorities and initiated a mechanism for a country-driven consultation process which would deal with some of the main issues identified at the AGW3, such as mainstreaming the NAP into established consultative channels and encouraging the developed country Parties to give a more structured response to the needs of the implementation process in China.

10. To respond to the reiterated call of the Parties for assistance in mainstreaming national initiatives and accelerating the required consultative partnership building process, the secretariat and the Group of African, Caribbean and Pacific Countries (ACP) of the European Union (EU) jointly organized, in April and May 2001, a series of workshops in Cotonou (Benin), Addis Ababa (Ethiopia), Apia (Samoa) and Kingston (Jamaica), to gather UNCCD focal points and national authorizing officers in the respective regions. The purpose of these meetings was to introduce priority UNCCD-related activities in the context of the implementation of the ACP-EU Partnership Agreement. These meetings reviewed the combined challenges of desertification, drought and poverty eradication and spelled out options for concrete response strategies. The exchanges were thorough, fruitful and timely with the full participation of key decision-makers, so as to ensure that UNCCD implementation

measures will be moved gradually into broader development planning at the national and regional levels.

11. Activities at the national level aimed generally at assisting countries to face some of the difficulties in moving forward in the NAP process and initiating partnership arrangements. The second focus for support to affected country Parties continues to be regional cooperation and selected initiatives at the subregional level. Subregional programmes aim at fostering common interests and transboundary cooperation between neighbouring countries. Regional programmes could deliver effective services to Parties for information collection, capacity building, research and development and technology exchanges, notably through the flexible thematic programme networks which rely on existing institutions. Financial support for these activities has, however, become a pressing issue. Other activities have been undertaken through interregional programmes which seek to promote South-South dialogue and cooperation.

12. Another major focus of the secretariat's contribution in the period under review was the assistance provided to the implementation review process at logistical and substantive levels. In conformity with decision 1/COP.4, the secretariat was charged with the organization of the Ad Hoc Working Group's inter-sessional meeting on the subject of the in-depth review of the implementation process. The AHWG was convened during COP 4 and concluded its review with the inter-sessional meeting in March/April 2001. The preparation of country reports on the implementation process at the national level was assisted by the secretariat upon request.

13. The ratification of, and/or accession to, the Convention by countries which had not until then joined continues to be assisted as appropriate. The broad membership of the Convention that had reached 174 Parties by June 2001, including all developed countries, testifies to the relevance of the potential of this instrument to address desertification and land degradation issues under diverse climatic conditions and across a variety of ecosystems.

14. The call of the UNCCD for a more resolute involvement of civil society must also be translated into support for NGO activities. While it is understood that some resources are made available by the Global Mechanism to assist NGOs with relevant activities, the secretariat pursues its efforts to enable the NGO community to deliver their necessary contribution to the Conference of the Parties and to the implementation process at all levels.

15. In summary, the Parties have documented through the AHWG the substantive progress that has been accomplished by the Parties in formulating the frameworks for programme development at all levels. There is a broad expectation that the fifth session of the Conference of the Parties will need to define modalities for partnership arrangements to contribute to the sustainability of the efforts made by affected Parties at various levels.

II. MEASURES TO SUPPORT IMPLEMENTATION IN AFRICA

National level

16. At the national level, given the fact that African country Parties are well advanced in the elaboration of their national action programmes, the secretariat concentrated much of its efforts on the facilitation of the implementation process, thus focusing on the consultative mechanisms that should lead to the required partnership agreements called for by the relevant provisions of the Convention. In addition, the secretariat also assisted those countries which are still in the process of formulating or finalizing their national action programmes.

17. The implementation process in Africa was reviewed in detail by the AHWG during COP 4 and at its inter-sessional meeting, on the basis of the national reports submitted by 42 African countries to the third Conference of the Parties.

18. Most African countries have organized national awareness-raising seminars, in some cases followed by national forums to launch officially the preparation of their national action programmes. In addition, a number of countries decided to achieve consensus and validation on their finalized national action programmes by holding a second national forum which often included informal consultations with development partners.

19. To date, 19 African countries have finalized and validated their national action programmes. These are: Benin, Burkina Faso, Cape Verde, Chad, Djibouti, Ethiopia, Gambia, Lesotho, Malawi, Mali, Namibia, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Swaziland, Tanzania, Tunisia, Uganda and Zimbabwe. Nearly all these countries adopted the NAP officially through their respective governments. Furthermore, four countries are planning to finalize their national action programmes before the end of the year 2000.

20. So far, only a few countries have organized forums that focused on desertification activities, presenting priority programmes of the UNCCD national action programmes to development partners (Mali, 1999, Cape Verde, 2000). In countries where round table discussions did not take place, well-established partnership processes with bilateral and international development partners provided an opportunity for affected countries to introduce and integrate UNCCD national action programmes as a standing item of ongoing consultations and negotiations.

21. In the light of the above, the secretariat, together with the Global Mechanism, facilitated a meeting that aimed at identifying ways and means of enhancing the implementation of the Convention by integrating national action programmes into sustainable development strategies or, alternatively, launching consultative processes in affected countries. The meeting was held in Cotonou (Benin) in February 2000 and was attended by a dozen African national focal points from countries most advanced in the process of implementing their national action programmes, representatives of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the World Bank, the UNCCD secretariat, and the Global Mechanism.

22. As a follow-up to this meeting, the UNCCD secretariat participated in joint missions with the Global Mechanism, UNDP/UNSO and the German Agency for Technical Cooperation (GTZ) to Tunisia (September 2000) and Morocco (November 2000), with the objective of further facilitating the implementation process by assisting countries

in the organization of consultative donor meetings. Other countries, such as Benin, Niger and Uganda, have also been assisted, upon request, in the launching of such consultative processes.

23. In a related development, and on the basis of a decision of the Executive Board of UNDP, the UNCCD secretariat and the Regional Bureau for Africa of UNDP signed a memorandum of understanding in April 2001 with the objective of jointly assisting African countries in the implementation of the Convention, specifically through the organization of donor consultations which will lead to partnership agreements. A tentative calendar for 2001 - 2003 was agreed upon.

24. In the reporting period, the UNCCD secretariat, together with the ACP secretariat, has facilitated two workshops in Africa on the integration of priority activities related to combating desertification into the country support strategies in the context of the implementation of the ACP-EU Partnership Agreement (known as the "Cotonou Agreement"). The workshops were held in Addis Ababa (Ethiopia) in April 2001, for the Eastern and Southern African countries, and in Cotonou (Benin) in May 2001, for the Western and Central African countries. The workshops were attended by UNCCD national focal points and their respective European Development Fund (EDF) national authorizing officers. Both workshops made it clear that a close collaboration between their respective institutions is of major importance in order to mainstream the NAP in national development strategies and to mobilize resources for its implementation. The UNCCD and ACP secretariats are jointly following up the recommendations resulting from these meetings.

25. The workshops were followed by a one-day consultative meeting on the review of the NAP implementation process in those countries that had already finalized and validated their NAPs. Participants formulated recommendations on measures to be taken at national and international levels to support the consultative process for partnership agreements with development partners.

26. The secretariat has also supported various countries in the organization of national awareness-raising seminars, national forums and activities aiming at strengthening the capacities of the national coordinating bodies in countries such as Benin, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cape Verde, Chad, Côte d'Ivoire, Cameroon, Madagascar, Mauritania, Morocco, Niger, the Republic of Congo, Togo and Tunisia. In the same context, the secretariat participated in a joint mission with Portugal to Mozambique in June 2001, aiming at supporting the implementation of the Convention at the national level.

Subregional level

27. At the subregional level, consultations aimed at elaborating and subsequently implementing subregional action programmes within the Africa region have been undertaken. In this context, it should be mentioned that the secretariat facilitated the participation of all focal points for the subregional action programmes (SRAPs) of African ACP countries in the above-mentioned meetings held in Addis Ababa and Cotonou. These meetings concluded that priority areas of the SRAPs should be integrated into the Regional Support Strategy and the Regional Indicative Programme, both elaborated in the context of the Cotonou Agreement.

28. In western Africa, where the SRAP is being coordinated jointly by the Economic Community of Western African States (ECOWAS) and the Permanent Interstate Committee for Drought Control in the Sahel (CILSS), three out of eight thematic groups have up to now worked out a precise work programme within their specific area of cooperation: (1) Sustainable management of transboundary water resources; (2) information, training and communication; (3) control of crop pests, forest species and animal diseases. In addition, ECOWAS/CILSS organized a subregional workshop on exploring synergies between the Rio conventions which took place in October 2000 in Conakry (Guinea), with the support of the European Community and the technical assistance of the secretariat.

29. In Northern Africa, a set of priority projects within the subregional action programme to combat desertification in the Maghreb were elaborated and submitted to various development partners for consideration by the Secretary-General of the Arab Maghreb Union (AMU). A subregional workshop on resource mobilization and partnership building for the implementation of the Convention in Northern African countries was organized by the Global Mechanism, in coordination with the UNCCD secretariat, in Algiers (Algeria), in October 2000.

30. Transboundary cooperation is another option for implementing the Convention at the subregional level. To date, ten transboundary pilot projects have been formulated with the support of the secretariat, the subregional organizations, UNDP and other interested partners, of which seven are currently under implementation. The specific objective of these projects is to enhance the management of shared natural resources in a more effective manner, and to create conditions conducive to local integrated management. The approach consists in strengthening cooperation through community-based pilot projects located in border areas under the responsibility of the community-based organizations (CBOs), and the supervision of UNDP offices in the countries concerned. This approach is being followed by several Maghreb and Sahel countries such as Senegal/Mauritania, Mali/Mauritania, Mali/Algeria, Mali/Burkina Faso, Algeria/Tunisia, Niger/Burkina Faso, Niger/Mali. The formulation of four additional projects is planned.

31. In southern Africa, where cooperation on the subregional level is coordinated by the Southern African Development Community (SADC), emphasis has been placed on capacity building, institutional strengthening and networking as the main priority areas of activities within the framework of the subregional action programme. Progress has been made in the land degradation and desertification control programme as well as in the elaboration of concrete projects on early warning systems for desertification.

32. In eastern Africa, the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) organized, with the support of the secretariat, a subregional IGAD experts meeting on implementation of the NAPs and SRAP in October 2000, in Nairobi (Kenya). The meeting identified *inter alia* the issue of resource mobilization as the priority objective to be pursued, and IGAD was requested to strengthen further awareness at ministerial levels.

33. In October 2000, the secretariat and the Global Mechanism jointly organized a subregional workshop on resource mobilization for the UNCCD implementation for SADC and IGAD member countries. The main output from the workshop was a greater understanding of opportunities available and of synergies existing between bilateral and multilateral funding instruments.

34. In central Africa, the Central African Economic and Monetary Community (CEMAC), acting on behalf of 10 countries (Burundi, Cameroun, Chad, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon, Rwanda, Sao Tome and Principe, the Central African Republic, and the Republic of the Congo), is assisting its member countries, upon request, as a follow-up to the workshop organized with assistance from the secretariat in June 2000, with the objective of promoting the implementation of UNCCD in the countries of this subregion.

Regional level

35. At the regional level, the secretariat organized, jointly with the government of Algeria, the fourth Regional Africa Conference in Algiers, Algeria, in October 2000. The participants reviewed the implementation process at national, subregional and regional level and adopted recommendations in view of the issues to be discussed at the fourth Conference of the Parties. The fifth Regional Conference of African focal points is scheduled to be held in August 2001 in Maputo, Mozambique.

36. Most of the six thematic focal points of the thematic programme networks (TPNs), appointed by the third Regional Africa Conference in 1999, started activities to make their respective TPNs operational:

- Integrated management of international river, lake and hydro geological basins (TPN1);
- Agroforestry and soil conservation (TPN2);
- Rational use of rangelands and development of fodder crops (TPN3);
- Ecological monitoring, natural resources mapping, remote sensing and early warning systems (TPN4);
- Promotion of new and renewable energy sources and technologies (TPN5);
- Sustainable agricultural farming systems (TPN6).

37. Pursuant to three consultative meetings held in Bonn, Germany, in March/April 2000, the regional coordination unit assisted the respective thematic focal points to organize two TPN launching meetings, in Accra, Ghana (TPN1) and Lomé, Togo (TPN2). Recommendations focused on the strengthening of information systems, capacity building, and technical and scientific cooperation as well as on institutional, regulatory and legislative aspects. The launch meeting of TPN3 is planned to be held before the end of 2001.

38. The Regional Coordination Unit for Africa, hosted by the African Development Bank (AfDB), Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire, undertook the following during the period under review:

- Support to three thematic institutional focal points in order to prepare the formal launching of the three TPNs and subsequently to implement recommendations adopted by the meetings;

- Technical assistance to the fourth and fifth Africa Regional Conferences;

- One-day briefing session on implementation of the Convention for AfDB staff, April 2001, Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire;

- Facilitation of inter-agency coordination in Africa and mainstreaming of issues related to the Convention;

- Development of a monthly newsletter for the Regional Coordination Unit;

- Facilitation of communication between the secretariat and the relevant African regional and subregional institutions as well as the African countries;

- Representation of the UNCCD in subregional and regional meetings such as those organized by the Sahelo-Saharian Community (CEN-SAD) and the African Development Bank;

- Elaboration of joint work plans with various specialized institutions such as the African Development Bank (AfDB), the United Nations Institute for Training (UNITAR), the Observatory of the Sahara and the Sahel (OSS), and the Network for Environment and Sustainable Development in Africa (RENEDA).

III. MEASURES TO SUPPORT IMPLEMENTATION IN ASIA

National level

39. At the national level, owing to the fact that Asian country Parties were requested to prepare their national reports to the Conference of the Parties at its fourth session, the secretariat concentrated much of its efforts on assisting countries in meeting their obligations. Thirty reports were submitted by countries, of which 20 had received financial assistance for the reporting exercise.

40. To date, nine Asian countries have adopted their national action programmes, namely China, Kyrgyzstan, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Mongolia, Pakistan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan and Yemen. All other Asian countries are currently engaged in the process of preparing their national action programmes, while Turkmenistan continued with the implementation of its NAP. It is expected that Kazakhstan will complete the preparation of its NAP by the end of 2001.

41. In 2000 Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Turkmenistan continued to implement projects aimed at strengthening the role of national focal points. Yemen, after having finalized and adopted its NAP, is currently exploring the possibility of convening a round table for its implementation. UNDP/UNSO is providing direct support to affected countries in western Asia.

42. As mentioned in paragraph 10 above, a coordination meeting for partnership building and resource mobilization for the UNCCD implementation in China took place in Beijing from 6 to 10 June 2001. The meeting represented the initiation of a dialogue with donor governments and international organizations about supporting China in the implementation of its NAP. The meeting also represented a team effort, including the Global Mechanism, the UNCCD secretariat and the Chinese counterpart organizations, namely, the China National Committee to Implement the CCD, the State Forestry Administration, with assistance from UNDP and the Asian Development Bank (ADB).

43. The secretariat participated in activities of the Asian Development Bank with a view to facilitating the Bank's support for the preparation and implementation of NAPs. Likewise, contact was made with the relevant UNDP offices at Headquarters level in order to discuss and explore ways and means of facilitating the necessary technical assistance to Asian countries at national, subregional and regional levels.

44. A meeting on synergistic implementation of environmental conventions took place from 18 to 20 June 2001, in Mongolia. The meeting aimed at mobilizing public support and people's involvement in combating desertification in Mongolia and at strengthening the capacities of local stakeholders to address interlinked policy objectives. The discussions aimed furthermore at giving an overview of the national efforts to facilitate the implementation of the UNCCD and other interlinked multilateral conventions, as well as assessing types of multiple-purpose field projects. Proposals on participatory agro-forestry and soil conservation in dry land communities, integrated land based resources management and nature reserves in dry zones were discussed.

Subregional level

45. Subregional meetings were convened to support the preparation of national reports. Subregional organizations were involved in the process.

46. A meeting and a "dialogue/training workshop" on the preparation of the subregional action programme to combat desertification in the Aral Sea Basin were held in Kazakhstan in the first half of 2001 with the support of Germany. A meeting on the role of NGOs from Central Asia in preparation of the SRAP will be organized in September 2001 in Uzbekistan. The secretariat will participate in July 2001 in a meeting in Tajikistan on the preparation of the projects on combating desertification within the framework of the Regional Environmental Action Plan (REAP) for Central Asia and will contribute to the integration of the SRAP in the REAP activities.

47. The secretariat participated in activities relating to the subregional action programme for Western Asia during the Ad Hoc Working Group. As a follow-up to the endorsement of the Western Asian SRAP in Dubai in 2000, project proposals were submitted to the SRAP coordinator and reviewed accordingly. It is foreseen, apart from pilot activities implemented in various countries, that an inventory of ongoing activities related to the Thematic Programme Networks of the Western Asian SRAP be established, namely an inventory on water resources management (TPN1) and an inventory on issues relating to vegetative cover (TPN2).

48. The secretariat fostered a subregional forum where Pacific island countries could review challenges and priority objectives relating to land degradation and drought. It successfully initiated exchanges and networking among the focal points of the subregions. As for ACP countries of the Pacific, the secretariat in joint cooperation with the ACP secretariat also organized a meeting between UNCCD focal points and EU national authorizing officers, so as to identify modalities for the integration of NAP activities into the Cotonou Agreement signed between the EU and the ACP countries. The meeting was held on 24 and 25 May 2001 in Apia, Samoa. Elements of a subregional initiative to support the Pacific island countries were reviewed and endorsed.

Regional level

49. The fourth Regional Asian Meeting of UNCCD national focal points in Asia took place in Ulan Bator, Mongolia, on 26 and 27 June 2001. The meeting was intended to encourage the sharing of information and the exchange of views, and to promote consensus, on salient issues of the UNCCD implementation in Asia. Discussions focused on issues such as the overall status of the UNCCD implementation in Asia, regional thematic programme networks (TPNs), subregional activities relevant to the UNCCD implementation, interregional collaboration between Asia and Africa for combating desertification, and preparation for COP 5.

50. The TPN3 on rangeland management and sand dune fixation was launched from 7 to 9 May 2001 in Yazd, Iran. The network is hosted by the Rangeland and Forest Organization of Iran. The commitment of the host country as the task manager of the regional network was recognized. So far, nine countries in the region have already officially expressed their interest in the network. Its objective is to improve the productivity of rangelands in arid and semi-arid regions.

51. After having officially launched TPN1 on monitoring and assessment in 1999, the secretariat is currently assisting the implementation of its programme of work. In order to facilitate the production of a meaningful desertification map, experts consultations are planned to take place which will aim at unifying the benchmarks and indicators within the Asian region. The long-term objective is to unify benchmarks and indicators all over the world.

52. In order to conform to the schedule of regional cooperation agreed upon by the Asian parties, the secretariat is also reviewing the preparatory steps of the three remaining TPNs whose themes cover water resources management (TPN4), strengthening capacities for drought impact management and desertification control (TPN5), and integrated local area development (TPN6). TPN 4, on water resources management for agriculture, is scheduled to be launched in November 2001 in Damascus, Syria. So far, ten countries have expressed their interest in the network by replying to the questionnaire jointly prepared by the Syrian host organization and the secretariat. ICARDA and ACSAD are also expected to play an active supporting role in addressing an issue which is of critical importance for the whole region. With regard to TPN 5 and TPN 6, Mongolia and Pakistan respectively will host those networks, as decided during COP 4. However, substantive preparation of the TPNs depends on the availability of financial resources.

53. The regional coordination unit (RCU) of Asia was set up at the headquarters of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) of the United Nations, and started its operation on 1 September 1999. A provisional agreement was reached between the UNCCD secretariat and ESCAP on the secondment of the regional coordinator. The secretariat is currently trying to secure further arrangements with potential organizations and Governments pending COP 5 decisions on the matter. In the meantime, the Government of China has contributed to the services of an expert to assist in the work of the Asia-RCU.

54. The Asia-RCU is now fully operational and its mandate includes, among other things:

(a) Assisting task managers and members of the TPNs to link their activities with the national action plans to combat desertification while providing inputs on capacity building, project preparation and monitoring;

(b) Assisting countries in the preparation of national reports and formulation of national action plans with regard to the UNCCD implementation;

(c) Liaising with other international and regional agencies/institutions related to UNCCD in order to ensure that the TPN activities have institutional synergies with other relevant initiatives;

(d) Playing a significant role in brokering efforts among relevant international organizations and inter-governmental bodies in the region for concerted action in addressing desertification issues in the region; and

(e) Providing support to policy coordination for natural resources management at the regional level and representing the UNCCD secretariat in meetings and conferences relevant to the UNCCD taking place in the region.

IV. MEASURES TO SUPPORT IMPLEMENTATION IN LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN

National level

55. At the national level, all the countries of the Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC) region submitted their national reports to the Conference of the Parties at its fourth session, and the secretariat concentrated much of its efforts on assisting them to meet their obligations. Thirty national reports and two regional reports were presented, with the assistance of the secretariat, upon request.

56. An in-depth review of the reporting process took place during COP 4 and was extended to the AHWG inter-sessional meeting in Bonn in April 2001. All reporting country Parties prepared and submitted their relevant national level activities in the implementation of the UNCCD.

57. Assistance was granted in 2001 to the governments of Grenada, Saint Kitts, Saint Lucia and Saint Vincent for preparing national awareness seminars. In addition, the governments of Colombia, Suriname and Venezuela, which were scheduled to hold awareness raising seminars in 2000, did so in the course of 2001.

58. To date, seven countries of the region have adopted their national action programmes, namely Argentina, Bolivia, Chile, Cuba, Ecuador, Mexico and Peru. The secretariat has continued to encourage and assist, where possible, the preparation of these programmes in a number of countries, including Guatemala and Jamaica, which started their NAP processes during the first half of 2001. The secretariat also received requests for assistance from Paraguay and Honduras and is responding to them with the provision of expertise and information whenever resources are available.

59. The secretariat is involved in continuous discussions with authorities in Bolivia and Cuba for the organization of the first partnership meetings with relevant donor countries and/or agencies. The lack of adequate financial support has been the major impediment to the implementation process in the region. The secretariat has consulted with potential partners, including foundations. Unfortunately no positive results have so far been secured.

60. The secretariat also assisted Bolivia, Cuba, El Salvador and Venezuela in organizing synergy workshops, demonstrating complementarities and inter-linkages among the Rio conventions. These workshops attracted the attention of relevant authorities, stakeholders and the donor community present in these countries, and aimed at finding new ways to make the implementations of the Rio agreements more effective, especially at the national level.

Subregional level

61. The development of the Grand Chaco subregional action programme was also supported. Steps are currently being taken to secure its future funding. The objective of the project is to develop a sustainable development programme for the region involving Argentina, Bolivia and Paraguay. The proposed activities have been based on the ecosystem approach and on natural resource management, with common demand-oriented activities among the participating countries. During the period under review, the secretariat sought closer cooperation with partners such as the Global Mechanism, UNDP and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP). Efforts are ongoing to increase cooperation with the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) and the World Bank in the interest of greater support for implementation.

62. The development of the La Puna subregional action programme was also supported. Steps are currently being taken to secure funding. This programme is entering its operational phase aiming at the strengthening of capacities, education and awareness raising, the designing of an organizational framework at national and subregional level in order to harmonize policies and local participation, especially among indigenous communities. Efforts to interest regional and subregional financial agencies started during 2001.

Regional level

63. The UNEP regional office in Mexico hosts the regional coordination unit for Latin America and the Caribbean. The unit undertook the following tasks during the period under review:

(a) To install and operate a matrix node with complete Internet access, including a home page, electronic conferenc ng, electronic libraries, e-mail and access to other information networks;

(b) To develop an operational plan for the network;

(c) To provide technical assistance to the governments of Brazil, Chile and Mexico in the development of a standard methodology for quantifying key indicators of plant and animal biodiversity and to include them in a spatially distributed database of other physical, biological and socio-economic data related to the degradation of land in arid and semi-arid zones in collaboration with the Natural Heritage Institute;

(d) To prepare and negotiate the GEF project proposal Block "B" to develop an indicators model for dryland ecosystems in selected countries of Latin America;

(e) To provide technical assistance to governments of Central America under a project proposal related to the management and sustainable development of priority watersheds in the region including the prevention of land degradation;

(f) To provide technical assistance for the implementation of a programme for sustainable development of the Gran Chaco Americano; and

(g) To provide technical and logistical assistance to the sixth Regional Meeting for Latin America and the Caribbean, held in San Salvador from 17 to 19 October 2000.

64. The secretariat continued with the publication of the news bulletin online, which is sent out through the Information Network on Desertification and Drought (DESELAC) to more than 700 subscribers consisting of national focal points, government authorities, NGOs, academic institutions and representatives of affected communities. Through DESELAC the secretariat has also supported countries in addressing their problems with regard to connecting to the network. During the course of the year, it is expected that the level of information transmitted through the network will be maintained.

65. In accordance with the secretariat's efforts to improve and expand DESELAC, a new comprehensive coverage pilot programme will start in Barbados, making the online bulletin available to all elementary and secondary schools in the country. From the experiences drawn from this project, similar programmes will be initiated in other countries of the region.

66. The seventh Regional Meeting was held in August 2001 in La Serena, Chile. Special attention was paid to issues such as the operative phase of national action programmes, the use of technological and scientific benchmarks and indicators, and how to ensure a timely NAP implementation. The meeting reviewed the use and implementation of traditional knowledge and horizontal cooperation that can be performed by interested Parties in the region.

V. MEASURES TO SUPPORT IMPLEMENTATION IN THE NORTHERN MEDITERRANEAN AND OTHER EUROPEAN COUNTRIES

National level

67. At the national level, Albania and Croatia became Parties to the UNCCD prior to COP 4, and Bulgaria has acceded since then. Some other Balkan countries and countries from Central and Eastern Europe may accede before COP 5. The secretariat organized several missions to these countries in order to sensitize decision makers to the opportunities offered by UNCCD.

68. Affected country Parties of the Northern Mediterranean and other European countries are at various stages of the elaboration of their national action programmes. Spain adopted the outline of its NAP in June 2000 in Murcia (Spain), and Greece approved its NAP in 2001. Romania has finalized the preparation of its NAP. Turkey is currently working with UNDP on the preparation of its NAP. Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia continue, with financial assistance from the secretariat, the elaboration of their NAPs. Other countries also are at various stages of the implementation phase. Italy and Portugal are progressing with the implementation of their NAPs. The Republic of Moldova is now in the process of starting the implementation of its NAP.

69. Countries of Annex IV (Greece, Italy, Spain, Portugal and Turkey) submitted to COP 4 their national reports as affected country Parties as well as a regional report prepared by the Italian Presidency of Annex IV. As requested by decision 1/COP.4 , they also participated in the in-depth review on the implementation process of the UNCCD and presented their reports to both sessions of the AHWG. Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Romania and Moldova also submitted their national reports to COP 4 and presented them to the AHWG sessions.

Regional level

70. At the regional level of the group of Annex IV, the fifth ministerial meeting and a focal point meeting were held in Murcia (Spain), to prepare the reporting process to COP 4 and to adopt officially the final terms of reference (TOR) of the regional action programme (RAP). A joint meeting with focal points and NGOs in Murcia also discussed and approved the terms of reference of the RAP.

71. Furthermore, a focal point meeting was held in September 2000, in Brussels, in order to prepare for COP 4 and the presentation of the reports to the AHWG.

72. A meeting was also organized by the research directorate of the European Commission to present to focal points of the UNCCD the results of various concerted action programmes related to desertification issues. Discussions focused on how to integrate them into the framework of the Convention.

73. Two other focal points meetings were held during COP 4 and during the AHWG in April. In March 2001 in Ancona, Italy, the sixth ministerial meeting to transfer the Presidency of Annex IV from Italy to Greece was held and the work programme for the next two years was discussed. The first focal points meeting under the Greek Presidency was held in Athens in June 2001.

74. Further to decision 7/COP.3 on an additional regional implementation annex to the Convention for Central and Eastern Europe, Annex V for Central and Eastern Europe was adopted at COP 4 and will enter into force in September 2001. It is planned that a meeting for the country Parties to the Convention from Central and Eastern Europe, will be organized in September 2001, in Prague, Czech Republic.

VI. MEASURES TO SUPPORT IMPLEMENTATION AT THE INTERREGIONAL LEVEL

75. The government of Mali, with support from the secretariat, organized the second African-Latin American and Caribbean Forum, held in March 2000 in Timbuktu and Bamako, Mali. Concrete offers on the exchange of experiences through training and workshops were made by more than 10 countries so as to enhance South-South cooperation and to implement the interregional platform adopted during the first forum held in Recife in 1998. In order to support this initiative, Venezuela announced a contribution of 1 million US$ to fund activities over a period of three years.

76. Since then, two of the planned activities have been implemented: the government of Portugal, jointly with the secretariat, organized two weeks training on combating soil degradation, in which eleven Portuguese speaking African experts participated, in August/September 2000 in Portugal. In addition, a tri-national meeting (Cuba, Venezuela, and Mali) on soil salinity was held in May 2001 in Cuba.

77. The third Asia-Africa Forum on Combating Desertification was held in Ulan Bator, Mongolia, from 21 to 25 June 2001 to review UNCCD implementation in both continents and to explore concrete measures for promoting UNCCD implementation through interregional collaboration. The third Forum was a follow-up to the first and second Forums which were held in Beijing, China, in August 1996 and Niamey, Niger, in 1997. At the third Forum, discussions were held on a variety of issues. These included NAP implementation, synergistic implementation of interlinked environmental conventions, early warning systems, interregional collaboration through regional thematic programme networks, capacity building and human resources development.

78. The preparation of an interregional action programme to combat desertification in countries of Central Asia, the Transcaucasus and Eastern Europe had still to be postponed because some Eastern European countries have yet to accede to the UNCCD. It is hoped that, as soon as countries have acceded to the Convention, the initiative will be revitalized.

79. A regional meeting of the Mediterranean NGOs was held in Murcia, Spain in mid-June to discuss and exchange views on the implementation of the Convention in annexes involving Mediterranean countries. The UNCCD secretariat also participated in the 4th meeting of the Mediterranean Wetlands Committee to promote cooperation between the UNCCD and Ramsar focal points and the identification of pilot projects in Mediterranean arid lands with Ramsar sites.

Annex

MAJOR NATIONAL, SUBREGIONAL AND REGIONAL MEETINGS, HELD OR PLANNED, WITH SECRETARIAT INVOLVEMENT
June 2000 - December 2001

Africa

2000

29-31 May	Nairobi	Subregional workshop for IGAD and SADC member countries on procedures to access existing financial mechanisms (organized by GM in coordination with the UNCCD secretariat)
17-21 June	Brazzaville	National awareness raising days
19-21 June	N'Djamena	Technical consultation on the Lake Chad Basin Ecosystem GEF Project
26-28 June	N'Djamena	Meeting of central African UNCCD national focal points
30 June	Ouagadougou	Official launching of the national action programme to combat desertification
9-12 July	Nouakchott	National forum to launch the elaboration of the national action programme
September - December	Burundi	National awareness days
6-9 September	Niamey	National forum to validate the national action programme to combat desertification
26-27 September	Banjul	National forum to validate the national action programme to combat desertification
29-30 September	Praia	Donors consultative national forum
1-5 October	Conakry	Subregional meeting for Western Africa on synergies between Rio conventions
2-4 October	Mombasa	IGAD/SADC subregional workshop on resource mobilization
9-13 October	Nairobi	Subregional forum to facilitate the implementation of the IGAD SRAP
22-24 October	Algiers	Fourth Africa Regional Conference preparatory to COP 4
25-26 October	Algiers	North Africa subregional workshop on resource mobilization

21-22 November	Khartoum	IGAD Council of Ministers
23-24 November	Khartoum	IGAD 8th Summit of the Assembly of Heads of State and Government
29 November-1 December	Accra	Regional launching meeting of the UNCCD Thematic Programme Network on integrated management of international river, lake and hydrological basins (TPN1) in Africa

2001

11-12 January	Niamey	First meeting of ministers in charge of the environment of States of the Sahelo-Saharian Community (CEN-SAD)
12-14 February	Khartoum	Third ordinary session of the conference of leaders and Heads of States of the Sahelo-Saharian Community (CEN-SAD)
25-26 April	Addis Ababa	Workshop on integration of UNCCD related activities in the ACP-EU Country Support Strategies in Eastern and Southern African countries
27 April	Addis Ababa	Consultation with selected countries from Eastern and Southern Africa to review NAP implementation
2-3 May	Cotonou	orkshop on integration of UNCCD related activities in the ACP-EU Country Support Strategies in Western and Central African countries
4 May	Cotonou	Consultation with selected countries from Western and Central Africa to review NAP implementation
21-25 May	Holguin (Cuba)	Tri-national meeting on soil salinization (Mali, Cuba and Venezuela)
13-15 June	Lome	Regional launching meeting of the UNCCD Thematic Programme Network on promotion of agroforestry and soil conservation (TPN 2) in Africa
15-16 June	Rabat	National forum to validate the national action programme to combat desertification
21-24 June	Ulan Bator	Third Asia-Africa forum on combating desertification

Planned

August	Bamako	National workshop on synergistic implementation of interlinked multilateral conventions on sustainable development
27-29 August	Maputo	Fifth Africa Regional Conference preparatory to COP 5

November	Nairobi	Regional launching meeting of the UNCCD Thematic Programme Network on rational use of rangelands and fodder crops (TPN 3) in Africa

Asia

2000

3-7 July	Beijing	GM/UNCCD Joint mission for the preparation of the Consultation Meeting on Partnership Building and Resource Mobilization
18-21 July	Bishkek	Ministerial meeting on the preparation of the subregional action programme to combat desertification in the Aral Sea Basin
7 - 8 November	Bangkok	Third Asian focal points meeting
9 - 10 November	Bangkok	Workshop on resource mobilization for UNCCD implementation in Asia
20 December	Bonn	First meeting of the Working Group on the preparation of the subregional action programme to combat desertification in the Aral Sea Basin

2001

28 March	Bonn	Western Asian SRAP Management Committee meeting
23-25 April	Almaty	Dialogue/training workshop on the subregional action programme to combat desertification in the Aral Sea Basin
26-27 April	Almaty	Second meeting of the Working Group on the preparation of the subregional action programme to combat desertification in the Aral Sea Basin
7-9 May	Yazd	Launching of Thematic Programme Network 3 on rangeland management for Asia
6-10 June	Beijing	Consultations on partnership building and resource mobilization
18 - 20 June	Ulan Bator	National forum on synergistic implementation of environmental conventions
21 - 25 June	Ulan Bator	Third Asia-Africa forum
26 - 27 June	Ulan Bator	Fourth Asian focal points meeting

Planned

23July-4 August	Tashkent	Training courses on strategic planning and projects management for Central Asian states
September	Tashkent	Meeting of NGOs from Central Asia on the subregional action programme to combat desertification in the Aral Sea Basin
September	Geneva	Third meeting of the Working Group on the preparation of the subregional action programme to combat desertification in the Aral Sea Basin
November	Beijing	TPN1 expert consultation on benchmark and indicators for monitoring and assessment
November	Damascus	Launching of TPN 4 on water resources for agriculture
December	Yazd	Thematic Programme Network 3 consultation on design and distribution of experimental plots and on women's participation in the TPN

Latin America and the Caribbean

2000

29 - 30 May	Cordoba	Gran Chaco Meeting
17-19 October	San Salvador	Sixth Latin America and the Caribbean Regional Conference preparatory to COP 4
24 October	San Salvador	Workshop on resource mobilization for the UNCCD implementation in LAC
18 December	Bonn	Meeting of the Regional Executive Committee, during COP 4

2001

8 February	Bahamas	Bahamas ratification of the UNCCD
3 April	Bonn	Meeting of the Regional Executive Committee
17-18 May	Havana	Regional NGO-RIOD meeting
21-24 May	Holguín (Cuba)	Tri-national meeting on soil salinization (Cuba, Mali and Venezuela)
28-29 May	Kingston (Jamaica)	Meeting on the integration of priorities activities related to the combating land degradation into ACP-EU countries support strategies
3-9 June	St. Vincent	National awareness seminar

10-16 June	Basseterre	National awareness seminar
17-22 June	St. Georges	National awareness seminar
21-22 June	Caracas	National awareness seminar
22-29 June	Castries	National awareness seminar

Planned

16-18 July	La Paz	Workshop on synergies at the national level
16-17 August	Bogota	Seventh Latin America and the Caribbean Regional Conference preparatory to COP 5
10-13 September	San Salvador	Workshop on synergies in Central America
September	Caracas	Meeting on watershed management
8 October	Geneva	Meeting of the Regional Executive Committee
November	Havana	Workshop on synergies at the national level

Northern Mediterranean and other European Countries

2000

15 - 16 June	Murcia	Fifth ministerial and focal point meetings of the Group of Annex IV
16 - 18 June	Murcia	Mediterranean NGOs conference on desertification
19 September	Brussels	Focal points meeting of the group of Annex IV
November	Brussels	Presentation by the European Commission, Special Directorate for Research, of the research activities on desertification in the Mediterranean
15 December	Bonn	Focal points meeting of the group of Annex IV at the occasion of COP 4

2001

16 March	Ancona	Sixth ministerial meeting of the group of Annex IV
6 April	Bonn	Focal points meeting of the group of Annex IV at the occasion of the inter-sessional meeting of the Ad Hoc Working Group
21 - 23 May	Sesimbra	Fourth meeting of the Mediterranean Wetlands Committee
18 June	Athens	Focal points meeting of Annex IV

Planned

3 - 4 September	Prague	Meeting of UNCCD country Parties from Central and Eastern Europe
November	Athens	First workshop of MEDRAP Concerted Action Programme
8 October	Geneva	Ministerial meeting of Annex IV

Interregional and other activities

2000

4-8 March	Timbuktu/ Bamako	Second Africa-Latin America and the Caribbean Forum on Combating Desertification
12-13 December	Bonn	Third Round Table of Parliamentarians

2001

21 - 25 June	Ulan Bator	Third Asia-Afro forum
9-10 October	Geneva	Fourth Round Table of Parliamentarians

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UNITED NATIONS

Convention to Combat Desertification

Distr.
GENERAL

ICCD/COP(5)/3/Add.1
29 August 2001

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES
Fifth session
Geneva, 1-12 October 2001
Item 7 (b) of the provisional agenda

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CONVENTION

CONSIDERATION OF ADDITIONAL PROCEDURES OR INSTITUTIONAL MECHANISMS TO ASSIST THE CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES IN REGULARLY REVIEWING THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CONVENTION

Note by the secretariat

Addendum

CONTENTS

		Paragraphs	Page
I.	INTRODUCTION	1 - 3	3
II.	SCOPE	4 - 9	3
III.	BACKGROUND INFORMATION	10 - 21	4
	A. Procedures and institutional mechanisms for regularly reviewing the implementation of the Convention	10 - 15	4
	B. The Ad Hoc Working Group	16 - 21	5
IV.	COMPILATION OF SUBMISSIONS		6
	A. Belgium on behalf of the European Union and its Member States		6
	B. Canada		8
	C. Iran (Islamic Republic of) on behalf of the Group of 77 and China		12
	D. United States of America		16

		Paragraphs	Page
V.	SUMMARY AND ANALYSIS OF SUBMISSIONS	22 - 46	18
	A. Foreword	22 - 28	18
	B. Summary of written proposals received from country Parties	29 - 46	19
	1. Principles governing the review of the implementation of the Convention	29 - 31	19
	2. Mandate of the Committee to Review the Implementation of the Convention (CRIC)	32	19
	3. Objectives	33	20
	4. Composition	34 - 36	20
	5. Criteria and methodology for conducting the review	37 - 40	20
	6. Frequency of meetings	41 - 42	21
	7. Outcome	43	21
	8. Financial implications	44	21
	9. Role of the secretariat	45 - 46	21

Annex

Draft terms of reference for a Committee to Review the Implementation of the Convention (CRIC) 22

I. INTRODUCTION

1. By its decision 6/COP.3, the Conference of the Parties (COP) invited the Parties and other interested institutions and organizations, including non-governmental organizations, to submit written proposals on the need for the establishment of a committee to review the implementation of the Convention, in order to take a decision at its fourth session and, if necessary, at its fifth session on how further to develop the existing review system.

2. By its decision 3/COP.4, the Conference of the Parties decided that further proposals and suggestions of Parties and other interested institutions, having taken into account the experience and comprehensive report of the AHWG on concrete recommendations for the review of implementation of the Convention, including proposals on procedures and modalities for the establishment of a committee to review the implementation of the Convention (CRIC), be submitted through the secretariat for consideration at the fifth session of the Conference of the Parties. By the same decision, the Executive Secretary of the Convention was requested to circulate the comprehensive report of the AHWG and those proposals at least eight weeks prior to the fifth session of the Conference of the Parties.

3. Four submissions were received from Parties, namely Belgium on behalf of the European Union and its Member States, Canada, the Islamic Republic of Iran on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, and the United States of America. This note sets forth the record of the contributions received from country Parties and interest groups as of 10 August 2001, and also a summary of proposals pertaining to additional procedures or institutional mechanisms to assist the Conference of the Parties in regularly reviewing the implementation of the Convention.

II. SCOPE

4. Section I is introductory and intends to place into perspective the decisions on the implementation review process.

5. Section II describes the methodology followed and explains the content of the various sections contained in this note.

6. Section III of this document provides background information on procedures and institutional mechanisms to review the implementation of the Convention, which have taken shape through various decisions of the Conference of the Parties, written proposals submitted by Parties, and the report of the AHWG to the fifth session of the Conference of the Parties, and other documents produced by the secretariat to this effect.

7. Section IV reproduces proposals and suggestions submitted by Parties and interest groups in accordance with decision 3/COP.4. The texts are reproduced as submitted.

8. Section V contains a synthesis of submissions and highlights the views of Parties on various aspects pertaining to the establishment of a committee to review the implementation of the Convention.

9. Annexed to this document are tentative terms of reference for a committee to review the implementation of the Convention, which contain, *inter alia*, provisions on the composition, mandate, nature, objectives and outcome of the CRIC, based on the written proposals received from Parties, contained in this note, and rules 27 to 33 of the rules of procedure, on subsidiary bodies.

III. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

A. Procedures and institutional mechanisms for regularly reviewing the implementation of the Convention

10. Article 22, paragraph 2 (a), of the Convention states that the Conference of the Parties shall regularly review the implementation of the Convention and the functioning of its institutional arrangements in the light of the experience gained at the national, subregional, regional and international levels, and on the basis of the evolution of scientific and technological knowledge.

11. The Convention, in article 26, paragraph 1, on procedures for communication of information, provides that each Party shall communicate to the Conference of the Parties at its ordinary sessions, through the permanent secretariat, reports on the measures which it has taken for the implementation of the Convention. In paragraphs 2 to 5 of the same article, the different obligations of Parties in reporting to the COP are outlined.

12. With regard to the review of the implementation process, it is important to recall that decision 11/COP.1 outlined the specific objectives of the procedures for the communication of information and review of implementation, which are: (a) to ensure the effective assessment of progress towards achieving the objectives of the Convention and to enable the Conference of the Parties to make appropriate recommendations to further those objectives; (b) to exchange information and data among Parties in order to maximize the benefits of successful measures and initiatives under the Convention; (c) to ensure that the Committee on Science and Technology and the Global Mechanism have access to the information and data necessary to carry out their mandates; and (d) to ensure that information on implementation is in the public domain and available to the international community, particularly intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations, and other interested entities.

13. In the same decision, it was also stated that the review of the implementation shall be based on reports by Parties on the implementation of the Convention, together with advice and information provided by the Committee on Science and Technology (CST) and the Global Mechanism (GM) consistent with their respective mandates and such other reports as the Conference of the Parties may call for. The specific obligations of the Parties are enshrined in paragraphs 3 to 9 (general obligation to report) and 10 to 15 (format and content of reports, language of reports and timetable for submission of reports) on communication of information.

14. The need to establish additional procedures or institutional mechanisms to assist the Conference of the Parties in its task of regularly reviewing the implementation of the Convention was considered at the second session of the COP. By its decision 10/COP.2, the Conference of the Parties decided to transmit for consideration at its third session a draft decision proposed by Indonesia on behalf

of the Group of 77 and China, and invited Parties to make submissions on the review of the implementation of the Convention.

15. At its third session, the Conference of the Parties initiated the review of the implementation of the Convention and considered the reports from affected African country Parties as well as reports from developed country Parties, United Nations agencies and bodies, and international and non-governmental organizations (NGOs). By decision 6/COP.3, an ad hoc working group was established to review and analyze in depth, at the fourth session of the Conference of the Parties, reports submitted at its third and fourth sessions in order to draw conclusions and propose concrete recommendations on further steps in the review of the implementation of the Convention.

B. The Ad Hoc Working Group

16. By its decision 1/COP.4, the Conference of the Parties, recalling article 22, paragraph 2(a), (b) and (c), as well as articles 24 and 26 of the Convention, and decisions 10/COP.1, 10/COP.2 and 6/COP.3, decided that the Ad Hoc Working Group (AHWG) should fulfil its mandate in accordance with the provisions of paragraph 3 of decision 6/COP.3, and should draw up conclusions and propose concrete recommendations for further steps in the implementation of the Convention. The AHWG would review all national reports individually prior to COP 5 and analyze reports by adopting thematic approaches without neglecting other issues contained in the reports.

17. At its first session, the AHWG reviewed the national reports of ten African, six Asian and four Latin American and the Caribbean affected countries, in addition to two Northern Mediterranean countries and one report from Central and Eastern European countries. Regional activities for all annexes were discussed, as well as subregional reports for Africa.

18. Due to the size of the report exercise and the time needed for the review and analysis of the reports, the Parties agreed on an inter-sessional meeting of the AHWG of up to 15 working days, in order to complete the review of reports before COP 5. The AHWG was then reconvened during three weeks from 16 March to 6 April 2001 in Bonn, Germany.

19. The resumed session of the AHWG was attended by representatives of 111 Parties to the Convention. The regional and interest groups as well as five United Nations and international organizations were represented. Representatives of the CST and NGOs also attended the meeting.

20. The AHWG completed the review of reports of affected country Parties from Africa, Asia and Latin America and the Caribbean countries, in addition to those of the Northern Mediterranean and other affected countries. Subregional and regional activities for implementation of the Convention in regions other than Africa were likewise considered. It further heard presentations of the reports of the developed country Parties, the programmes of the United Nations system, multilateral agencies and institutions, as well as other intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations.

21. The AHWG made a number of recommendations, which are contained in its comprehensive report to the fifth session of the Conference of the Parties (ICCD/COP(4)/AHWG/6).

IV. COMPILATION OF SUBMISSIONS[1]

A. Belgium on behalf of the European Union and its Member States

The fourth Conference of the Parties decided (decision 3/COP.4) to invite Parties and other interested institutions to present further proposals and suggestions on concrete recommendations for the review of implementation of the Convention. These proposals and suggestions had to be submitted through the secretariat for consideration at the fifth session of the Conference of the Parties.

The European Union (EU) would like to recommend the following regarding the modalities of the review mechanism:

Introduction

Article 26 of the Convention provides that each Party shall communicate to the Conference of the Parties at its ordinary sessions, through the permanent secretariat of the Convention, reports on measures which it has taken for the implementation of the Convention and that the Conference of the Parties shall determine the timetable for the submission and format of such reports.

Article 22, paragraph 2, of the Convention provides that the Conference of the Parties shall regularly review the implementation of the Convention and the functioning of its institutional arrangements in the light of the experience gained at the national, subregional, regional and international levels and on the basis of the evolution of scientific and technological knowledge. The Conference shall also promote and facilitate the exchange of information on measures adopted by the Parties, determine the form and timetable for transmitting the information to be submitted pursuant to article 26, and review the reports and make recommendations on them.

Purpose of a review mechanism

The EU is of the view that it is indeed desirable to review the implementation of the Convention regularly and that this should be done in a structured, flexible and cost-effective manner. The main aim of this review should be to learn from past experience.

The focus of the review of the implementation of the Convention should be on sharing experiences so that Parties can help each other, in a flexible way, to support the continued efforts to combat desertification and mitigate the effects of drought.

Objectives of the implementation review

The objectives of the implementation review have been discussed and agreed at the first Conference of the Parties (decision 11/COP.1) and remain valid in the continued deliberation of the mechanisms and modalities for the review process. The specific objectives are the following:

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(a) To ensure the effective assessment of progress towards achieving the objectives of the Convention and to enable the Conference of the Parties to make appropriate recommendations to further those objectives;

(b) To exchange information and data among Parties in order to maximize the benefits of successful measures and initiatives under the Convention;

(c) To ensure that the Committee on Science and Technology and the Global Mechanism have access to the information and data necessary to carry out their mandates;

(d) To ensure that information on implementation is in the public domain and available to the international community, particularly intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations and other interested entities.

In addition, special consideration should be given to synergies at the national level between the UNCCD and other multilateral environmental agreements.

Methodology for the review

Any review of implementation will rely mainly on national reports on the measures taken for implementation of the Convention, in particular the reports on the implementation of the national action programmes (NAPs).

The review should be made regularly and systematically and should make use of the established existing report mechanisms. The evaluation could, preferably, take place every third/fourth year to limit the reporting burden on Parties.

The review process should have a bottom-up approach, where the main focus should be on the regional level. The task of organizing the regional proceedings should preferably be given to existing regional organizations. Further consideration is needed, to decide which regional organizations would be most appropriate.

Possible candidates could include organizations such as the Southern African Development Community (SADC) and the Permanent Interstate Committee for Drought Control in the Sahel (CILSS). The experience from the AHWG clearly shows that it is not sustainable or cost-effective to organize similar events on a regular basis.

The specific expertise on science and technology of the CST and of the Global Mechanism should be used in the review process. The reformed CST and the Global Mechanism should comment upon the results of the reviews made by the regional bodies.

In the case of the CST, the review could identify specific themes that would be appropriate for further deliberation within the context of the reformed CST.

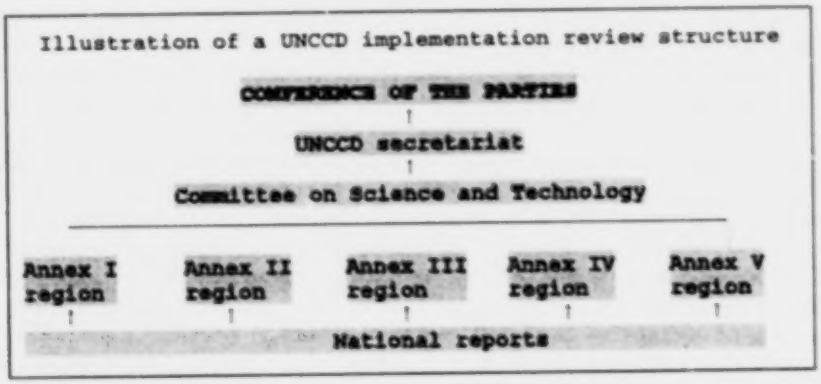
The UNCCD secretariat should, within its general mandate of compiling and transmitting reports submitted to it, compile the results of the regionally reviewed reports and submit these with the comments from the reformed CST and the Global Mechanism to the Conference of the Parties.

The Conference of the Parties is the supreme body of the Convention and as a priority the Conference should regularly review the implementation of the Convention. During the COP the results would be discussed, and when appropriate further recommendations adopted, on the implementation of the Convention. The COP can, within its existing mandate, discuss and draw conclusions on the reports presented by the UNCCD secretariat.

Review structure

The structure for the review mechanism could be illustrated as follows:

Within the mandate of the existing institutions an integrated review mechanism could be established. The suggested review structure has a bottom-up approach, and will be cost-effective by making use of the expertise within the institutions of the Convention. It has an additional element whereby established appropriate regional bodies would do the basic work of evaluating the national information on implementation.



Participation

It is essential that the review process will involve all relevant stakeholders in an open and transparent process.

B. Canada

The following is a Canadian proposal for the enhancement of the implementation review process, which we consider as a fundamental function of the Convention. In our view, implementation review contributes to the effectiveness of the Convention by providing Parties with a learning mechanism through which information exchange can be used to inform national implementation, both in developing and developed countries.

Decision 3/COP.4 invites Parties and other interested institutions to provide "concrete recommendations for the review of the implementation of the Convention, including proposals on procedures and modalities for the establishment of a committee to review the implementation of the Convention (CRIC)". This decision also requires Parties to take into consideration the outcome of the proceedings of the AHWG, which concluded its sessions on 6 April 2001.

Lessons learned from implementation review at COP 3 and COP 4

As a starting point, COP 3 highlighted important challenges and constraints both in the organization of work and in defining a methodology for implementation review, and concluded that there was a need for a dedicated implementation review (IR) mechanism. The AHWG of COP 4 provided us with a unique opportunity to test a set of procedures, based on COP decisions such as 11/COP.1, 6/COP.3 and 1/COP.4, and to explore the role of Convention bodies in implementation review.

Discussions at COP 3 and COP 4 resulted in a growing consensus about the purpose and spirit of the process of IR; it is viewed as a collaborative, flexible, experience-sharing and lessons-learned process, rather than as an assessment of compliance. Its purpose is to enable the Conference of the Parties to contribute advice and recommendations in order to improve national and/or regional implementation. Both at COP 4 and more particularly during the inter-sessional meeting of the AHWG, proceedings demonstrated the need for, and usefulness of, a technically oriented discussion of implementation. In our view, a separation between the processes of negotiation and the review of implementation facilitates the participation of technical experts and focal points - who are directly involved in implementation - and is conducive to more grounded, relevant and fruitful discussions on implementation.

But the AHWG also highlighted some challenges. In proceeding with country-by-country review, trends and themes that were potentially important to all were eclipsed by national details. Although the individual review has provided us with a wealth of pertinent national information, it has impeded us from reaping collective lessons of implementation. In addition, holding regional sessions has hindered cross-fertilization of ideas and innovations between affected regions.

For example, across regions there are many countries which share common ecological features, or that may have had similar implementation experiences. Countries which are less advanced in their national implementation would benefit from synthesized presentations of lessons learned from advanced countries regardless of their regional grouping. However, the regional structure of the AHWG discussions proved a hindrance when attempting to identify these common threads and kindred experiences, and to capture lessons learned.

In conclusion, it is clear that there is a need for systematic implementation review, but further definition of the nature of this process, and of the best tools to reach the objectives of implementation review, is required. This can be solved by refining our expectations of implementation review, by identifying themes around which to cluster our review and by delimiting parameters for efficiency and effectiveness.

Strategic considerations

In the light of past implementation review experience, Canada's understanding is that many Parties have expressed the following expectations:

- The implementation review process should aim to provide information that could inform, as appropriate, other Parties' implementation of the Convention.

- That being said, the IR process should be recognized as a mutually beneficial, voluntary learning process that consequently should not result in prejudice.

- Finally, in accordance with the spirit of the Convention, the implementation review process should be inclusive of all interested participants, including non-governmental and intergovernmental organizations and Convention bodies (GM, CST).

Framing the discussions for efficiency and effectiveness:

- The creation of a distinct body could provide significant added value over the existing COP/COW (Committee of the Whole) process, by creating a dedicated forum in which focused discussion between technical experts and/or focal points can take place.

- A distinct body would provide all parties with an opportunity to discuss and analyze important issues, and to benefit from the presence and contribution of the greatest number of stakeholders, including NGOs, intergovernmental organizations (IGOs) and Convention bodies.

- In our view, a more effective use of time and resources would be achieved by examining information about implementation on a thematic basis, rather than on a national, case-by-case basis.

- Review of implementation need not be structured under the usual regional groupings. While not diminishing the necessity and value of national (and other) reports, presentations could draw from them important lessons on the basis of selected cross-cutting themes and issues.

- The implementation review mechanism should be supported by the circulation in advance of appropriate, timely and adequate information by Parties, as well as some preliminary thematic analysis and/or synthesis, which could be spearheaded by Parties within regional meetings, prior to sessions, or for the preparation of which the COP would have to identify resources.

- A thematic review process could also imply some modifications to reporting standards and guidelines to include selected themes and issues. COP 5 should seek to confirm or refine existing reporting guidelines in order to promote provision of adequate to new IR needs. In addition, the COP may wish to reconsider the rotating schedule of reporting by region.

- Finally, cost-effectiveness will have to be taken into consideration when considering logistical parameters of the reviewing body, such as the frequency, location and length of sessions and bureau meetings.

Modalities for future implementation review

Mandate: The reviewing body's overall mandate would be "to regularly review the implementation of the Convention in the light of the experience gained at the national, subregional, regional and international level, and to facilitate the exchange of information on measures adopted by the Parties pursuant to article 26" (art. 22, para. 2(a) and (b)) in order "to draw conclusions and propose concrete recommendations on further steps in the implementation of the Convention" (decision

6/COP.3). This mandate is not conceived as an assessment of compliance, but rather as the basis for constructive information exchange.

Objectives: As per decision 11/COP.1 (para.2), the objectives of the review process would be:

(a) to ensure an effective assessment of progress towards achieving the objectives of the Convention and to enable the Conference of the Parties to make appropriate recommendations to further those objectives;

(b) to exchange information and data among Parties in order to maximize the benefits of successful measures and initiatives under the Convention [and to identify and address challenges];

(c) to ensure that the Committee on Science and Technology and the Global Mechanism have access to the information and data necessary to carry out their mandates [and can contribute to the discussions];

(d) to ensure that information on implementation is in the public domain and available to the international community, particularly intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations, and other interested entities.

Method for review: Proceedings should be organized according to a thematic (rather than regional) approach , with a view to facilitating informal technical exchange on key issues. Reports submitted by Parties and other institutions as per Article 26 and decision 11/COP.1 will continue to constitute the basis of the implementation review process; however, in order to facilitate focused discussion, the information provided would be synthesized and consolidated according to selected themes. Review of reports from the secretariat, the CST and the GM, however, would remain under the COP/COW's responsibility. However, these bodies (or representatives thereof in the case of the CST) are strongly encouraged to participate in and contribute to the discussions (as per decision 1/COP.4).

Outcome: The outcome of the review process would be a comprehensive report, much like the AHWG's Co-Chairmen's report, highlighting key achievements and challenges, and including recommendations for enhancing implementation. This report, along with other analytical work on implementation, would be transmitted to the COP for approval.

Entity: In our view, considerations relating to the effectiveness of the mandate, objective and methodology of the review process have precedence over structural or institutional issues. That being said, Canada would be open to exploring the creation of a distinct body for implementation review under articles 22 and 26.

Participation: Participation in this body would be open to all, including representatives of non-governmental and intergovernmental organizations, the bureau of the CST and the Global Mechanism.

Rules of procedures: The review body would be subject to the same rules of procedures as the COP for election, membership and decision-making purposes. In addition, Parties could elect a bureau using the same procedures as the COP (decision 1/COP.1) or the AHWG (decision 1/COP.4), and its chairperson(s) would then become an additional members of the COP bureau.

Organization of work: Considerations of cost-effectiveness should be given due attention when arranging sessions of the review body, as well as opportunities and constraints in linking its work with other Convention processes, such as meetings of the CST, and in maximizing participation by the greatest number of stakeholders. Special attention should be directed to addressing the issue of continuity of the work of the UNCCD once the COPs begin to meet biennially.

C. Iran (Islamic Republic of) on behalf of the Group of 77 and China

INTRODUCTION

1. By its decision 3/COP.4, operative paragraph 7, the Conference of the Parties "decides that further proposals and suggestions of Parties and other interested institutions, having taken into account the experience and comprehensive report of the Ad Hoc Working Group (AHWG), on concrete recommendations for the review of implementation of the Convention, including proposals on procedures and modalities for the establishment of a committee to review the implementation of the Convention (CRIC), be submitted through the secretariat for consideration at the fifth session of the Conference of the Parties".

2. In addition, in operative paragraph 8 of the same decision, the Conference of the Parties "requests the Executive Secretary of the Convention to circulate the comprehensive report of the Ad Hoc Working Group and those proposals at least eight weeks prior to the fifth session of the Conference of the Parties".

3. In the framework of the application of those provisions, the Group of 77 and China would like to present their proposals and suggestions in two parts:

I. Recommendations for the review of the implementation of the Convention;

II. Proposals on procedures and modalities for the establishment of a committee to review the implementation of the Convention (CRIC).

PART I: RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE REVIEW OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CONVENTION

4. The Group would like to recall, as contained in its contribution of April 2000, the objectives of the review of the implementation of the Convention as follows:

(a) Analyze in-depth reports submitted by Parties as well as by relevant organs, funds and programmes of the United Nations system and other intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations in order to draw conclusions and propose concrete recommendations on further steps in the implementation of the Convention;

(b) Closely look at the reasons why implementation is lagging behind, despite the numerous and strong commitments made by the international community on desertification, drought and land degradation issues;

(c) Identify obstacles and difficulties in implementing the Convention;

(d) Suggest a clear direction, based on lessons learned;

(e) Get a clear picture of success factors and develop guidelines for the future;

(f) Promote experience sharing and information exchange among country Parties and all other interested institutions and organizations;

(g) Encourage learning on a broad range of substantive and emerging issues, including best practices;

(h) Focus on agreeing benchmarks and indicators for the future. Concrete targets and agreements on their monitoring can help create the necessary pressure to bring about change;

(i) Provide an assessment of the financial resources and other supports received by affected developing countries towards the achievement of the objectives of the Convention; and

(j) Inform the donors and the international community about the use of resources and other supports provided to affected developing countries to implement the Convention.

5. In this context, and taking into account discussions and debates on the issue from the first to the fourth sessions, the review of the implementation of the Convention should be a permanent and an integral part of the task of the Conference of the Parties in order regularly to assess:

(a) Progress made by affected country Parties;

(b) Support provided by bilateral and multilateral development partners;

(c) Efficiency and effectiveness of policies and strategies envisaged for the implementation of the Convention.

6. This would mean that the review, among other things, should contribute to:

(a) Facilitating exchange of information on best practices and lessons learned in implementing the Convention;

(b) Identifying new challenges and opportunities in the light of developments in the implementation of the Convention;

(c) Adjusting or better classifying priority themes and issues set out particularly in national action programmes, with a view to streamlining and focusing on activities and projects that meet the needs of people living in affected areas and enhancing measures to combat desertification and/or mitigate the effects of drought.

7. During previous sessions of the COP, all Parties made several proposals, suggestions and concrete recommendations for the review of the implementation of the Convention. However, in the light of the experience and comprehensive report of the Ad Hoc Working Group (AHWG), the G77 and China would like to make the following recommendations:

(a) Participation in the review process of the implementation of the Convention should involve all country Parties and other relevant actors, including interested institutions, organizations, bodies and NGOs;

(b) All Parties, including developed country Parties, shall submit their national reports to the Conference of the Parties for the review purpose, in accordance with the provisions of the Convention;

(c) Each affected developing country Party shall, individually, present the summary of its national report during the review process by the appropriate body or mechanism designated for this purpose;

(d) Review of reports submitted by developed country Parties and those from institutions and organizations should be done parallel to the review of national reports of affected developing country Parties because they shall indicate in their presentation financial resources and other supports provided by bilateral and multilateral development partners;

(e) Review of reports relating to the implementation of subregional and regional action programmes should follow the same procedure but should focus on themes where subregional and regional activities and projects have a comparative advantage over national action programmes;

(f) Consideration of reports submitted by NGOs should be done per subregion, region or network, depending on the number of reports received before the deadline. At national level, NGOs should be invited to contribute to the preparation of the reports of their respective countries;

(g) Review of reports should include the use of pertinent, quantifiable and readily verifiable indicators and benchmarks, as well as those relating to measuring the participation of local populations, communities and major groups, particularly women, youth and NGOs;

(h) Review of reports should contribute to finding effective ways and means to facilitate the transfer of technology to affected developing country Parties, and to improve coordination among all actors;

(i) The review process should allow the secretariat easily to elaborate a comparative document among regions on the progress made by affected country Parties in the implementation of the Convention, in particular affected developing countries;

(j) In accordance with their respective mandates, the Committee on Science and Technology (CST) and the Global Mechanism (GM), before each session of the review, should provide written advice and information to be used for the review of the implementation of the Convention, including for the GM the role it plays in effectively promoting actions leading to the mobilization and channelling of substantial resources, including the transfer of technology.

PART II: PROCEDURES AND MODALITIES FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A CRIC

(a) Procedures

8. The procedures to apply for the establishment of a CRIC should be in conformity with the provisions of the Convention and the rules of procedure of the Conference of the Parties. In this regard, the following provisions of the Convention are important, notably article 22 paragraph 2 (a), (c) and (d):

"The Conference of the Parties is the supreme body of the Convention. It shall make, within its mandate, the decisions necessary to promote its effective implementation. In particular, it shall:

(a) Regularly review the implementation of the Convention and the functioning of its institutional arrangements in the light of the experience gained at the national, subregional, regional and international levels and on the basis of the evolution of scientific and technological knowledge;

(b) Establish such subsidiary bodies as are deemed necessary for the implementation of the Convention;

(c) Review reports submitted by its subsidiary bodies and provide guidance to them."

9. In this regard, legally speaking, the Conference of the Parties shall establish a committee to review the implementation of the Convention, as one of its subsidiary bodies.

10. The rules of procedure for meetings of the Conference of the Parties to the UNCCD shall apply mutatis mutandis to the proceedings of the CRIC. Therefore, the rule on credentials will not apply.

11. The official and working languages of the CRIC will be those of the United Nations. The proceedings of the CRIC will be carried out in the working languages of the Conference of the Parties.

12. In order to involve all Parties in the work of the CRIC and to facilitate rotation among the five regional Groups, the terms of office of members of its bureau will be two years. The five members of the bureau of the CRIC will take office at the meeting at which they are elected. However, the Chairman of the CRIC shall be elected at a plenary meeting of the Conference of the Parties. He/she shall take office at the first meeting of the CRIC during which the four other members of the bureau are elected.

13. As a general rule, the chairmanship of the CRIC shall rotate among the United Nations five regional Groups. Candidates for the chairmanship of the CRIC should be experienced in the process of the UNCCD. The Chairman of the CRIC should be a member of the Bureau of the Conference of the Parties.

(b) Modalities

14. The fifth session of the Conference of the Parties shall adopt a decision establishing the committee to review the implementation of the Convention (CRIC), as a subsidiary body under the guidance and authority of the Conference of the Parties. By adopting such a decision on the establishment of a CRIC, the COP will no longer use the Committee of the Whole (COW), which is an ad hoc body.

15. In this regard, the CRIC shall meet:

- during the meetings of the Conference of the Parties; and
- between two sessions of the Conference of the Parties.

16. During the meetings of the Conference of the Parties, the CRIC shall fulfil the current mandate and functions of the Committee of the Whole (COW).

17. Between two sessions of the Conference of the Parties, the CRIC shall review and analyse in depth the reports submitted by Parties, institutions and non-governmental organizations. The CRIC should draw conclusions, and propose concrete recommendations on further steps in the implementation of the Convention at all levels, as done by the Ad Hoc Working Group (AHWG).

18. Each meeting of the CRIC held between two sessions of the COP shall submit a comprehensive report to the Conference of the Parties, in light of the programme of work, conclusions and recommendations, as well as draft decisions for consideration and adoption by plenary meetings of the COP.

(c) Conclusions

19. The review of the implementation of the Convention should be seen as a formal, inclusive and transparent exercise with the participation of all Parties, non-State actors and observers, including NGOs, specialized institutions, United Nations and international organizations.

20. The Committee to be established, in fulfilling its mandate, will assist the Conference of the Parties in reviewing and assessing progress made in the implementation of the Convention, among other things through the analysis of relevant inputs from Parties and other actors. The CRIC will also identify emerging issues, trends and new approaches to issues affecting the implementation of the Convention. Furthermore, the CRIC will identify areas where coordination needs to be improved and modalities for achieving this.

21. Finally, and pursuant to the Declaration on the commitments to enhance the implementation of the Convention, the establishment of the CRIC will provide opportunities for Parties and other actors to engage in a fruitful dialogue among themselves for the well-being of people living in affected areas, notably those in developing countries. Therefore, the CRIC will contribute to achieving the objectives of the Convention, which are mainly combating desertification and/or mitigating the effects of drought worldwide. The reports of the CRIC would also serve as important tools, which will facilitate the integration of the implementation of the Convention into the development strategies and other relevant policy areas.

D. United States of America

Recommendations on procedures to review NAPs, SRAPs, and RAPs within the CRIC.

Constraints to current review system and regional approaches:

Country reviews take too much time to permit a full review of all reports at any single COP. Breakdown of the review schedule into regional groupings excludes full participation of the Parties and relevant organizations in any single review. In addition, review and discussion within a particular region limits lessons learned and cross-fertilization of ideas between regions.

Proposed changes to review procedures:

Reports should be reviewed according to thematic categories in order to increase sharing of lessons learned and cross-fertilization of ideas across regions. A potential breakdown of thematic categories includes:

- Stages of implementation - formulation of NAPs, implementation of NAPs, developed countries.

- Implementation issues - institutional development, participation, synergies between conventions, resource mobilization (national desertification funds).

- Similarity of environmental issues addressed by implementing Parties - small island states, temperate ecosystems, tropical ecosystems, desertification prevention, rehabilitation of degraded lands, etc.

It is proposed that the review of NAPs, SRAPs, and RAPs take place during one week of the Conference of the Parties and one week in the interim year between COPs. The review body should consist of Party representatives, representatives of the GM, the CST, United Nations organizations, and interested NGOs and CBOs.

Schedule of 15-minute presentations with a 45-minute discussion period in both the morning and afternoon sessions. Potential for 90 presentations in a one-week session (180 presentations per COP cycle - 90 during a COP and 90 inter-sessional).

Illustrative schedule for review:
Similarity of environmental issues addressed by implementing Parties

Day 1 - Morning and afternoon - desertification prevention
Day 2 - Morning and afternoon - rehabilitation of degraded lands
Day 3 - Morning - continuation of rehabilitation of degraded lands
Afternoon - tropical ecosystems
Day 4 - Morning - continuation of tropical ecosystems
Afternoon - temperate ecosystems
Day 5 - Morning - continuation of temperate ecosystems
Afternoon - small island States

Method of review:

Reviews would proceed theme by theme (i.e. participation, institutional arrangements, resource mobilization, etc.). Each country wishing to participate would choose a category(ies) under which they would present lessons learned for discussion (to be provided beforehand?). Within a given theme, sessions should consist of several presentations of lessons learned followed by a group discussion. Parties should be encouraged to present both positive and negative lessons learned. Lessons would be summarized by theme.

In-depth country NAPs, and SRAP reviews should take place at relevant subregional meetings. This type of review permits lessons learned and information sharing on a subregional basis.

V. SUMMARY AND ANALYSIS OF SUBMISSIONS

A. Foreword

22. It was acknowledged that the process of review and analysis by the AHWG of reports submitted at the third and fourth sessions of the Conference of the Parties, provided a unique opportunity for an in-depth analysis of individual national reports.

23. Challenges as well as obstacles stemming from this review exercise were also highlighted. In the view of one Party, a country-by-country review tended to eclipse, by national specificities, potentially important trends and themes. Although the individual review of reports undertaken at the AHWG provided a wealth of pertinent national information, some Parties believed it could hamper the process of obtaining collective lessons about implementation. In addition, in the view of the same Party, holding regional sessions hindered cross-fertilization of ideas and innovations between affected regions.

24. Some submissions stressed the need to separate the implementation review process from the negotiation process, and the role of the Committee of the Whole in this context was questioned. However, most of the submissions recognized the need to establish a subsidiary body to ensure an effective review of the implementation of the Convention. On the other hand, one written proposal presented the view that an integration review mechanism could be established within the mandate of the existing institutions of the Convention.

25. Other submissions indicated that the effectiveness of the existing report mechanism could be improved by:

(a) Redefining the reporting guidelines (as per decision 11/COP.1) so that they will be adequate for the new implementation review mechanism;

(b) Conducting preliminary thematic analysis and/or synthesis to be spearheaded by Parties within regional meetings and/or subregional organizations;

(c) Reconsidering the rotating schedule of reporting by regions and/or limiting the reporting obligation to Parties by undertaking a complete evaluation every three or four years.

26. The links between the review process and the declaration of commitments to enhance the implementation of the Convention were also stressed in another submission.

27. All written proposals support the enhancement, continuity and improvement of the implementation review process of the Convention. Comments and deliberations focus subsequently on the modalities and structure of this process in order best to ensure its efficient performance.

28. There is some degree of convergence on the scope, mandate, objectives and functions of a committee to review the implementation of the Convention. Other issues may emerge during the discussions, for example in areas where Parties have not yet expressed any views.

B. Summary of written proposals received from country Parties

1. Principles governing the review of the implementation of the Convention

29. As recalled in most submissions, the guiding principles towards achieving the objectives of the UNCCD are enumerated in article 3 of the Convention. These principles chiefly concern ensuring that participation of populations and local communities in decisions regarding the design and implementation of programmes to combat desertification and drought, to improve cooperation and coordination at subregional, regional and international levels, to develop a better understanding of the nature and value of land and scarce water resources in affected areas, and to work towards their sustainable use, taking fully into consideration the special needs and circumstances of affected developing country Parties, and particularly the least developed among them.

30. In the opinion of one Party, the review of the implementation of the Convention should be a permanent and an integral part of the task of the Conference of the Parties, in order regularly to assess:

(a) The progress made by affected developing country Parties;

(b) The support provided by bilateral and multilateral development partners;

(c) The efficiency and effectiveness of policies and strategies envisaged for implementation of the Convention.

31. In general, Parties consider the enhancement of the implementation review process of the Convention to be a fundamental function of the Convention. There is broad agreement that this process should be conducted as a collaborative, flexible, experience-sharing and lessons-learnt process, rather than an assessment of compliance. Its aim is to enable the Conference of the Parties to provide advice and recommendations in order to improve implementation of the Convention at all levels. One Party, speaking on behalf of its group, proposes a decentralized regional review process. Others favour a unified review.

2. Mandate of the Committee to Review the Implementation of the Convention (CRIC)

32. As recalled in various submissions, the overall mandate of the CRIC would be to assist the Conference of the Parties to review the implementation of the Convention regularly, in the light of experience gained at the national, subregional, regional and international levels, and to facilitate the exchange of information on measures adopted by the Parties in order to draw conclusions and propose concrete recommendations on further steps to be taken in the implementation of the Convention.

3. Objectives

33. There is broad consensus that the objectives of the implementation review process for a CRIC should be in line with the goals stated in decision 11/COP.1 on procedures for communication of information and review of implementation. That is (a) to ensure an effective assessment of progress towards achieving the objectives of the Convention and to enable the Conference of the Parties to make appropriate recommendations to further those objectives; (b) to exchange information and data among Parties in order to maximize the benefits of successful measures and initiatives under the Convention and to identify and address challenges; (c) to ensure that the CST and the GM have access to the information and data necessary to carry out their mandates [and can contribute to the discussions]; and (d) to ensure that information on implementation is in the public domain and available to the international community, particularly intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations and other interested entities.

4. Composition

34. There is general agreement that participation in the review process on the implementation of the Convention should involve all country Parties and all other actors in the process, notably interested institutions, organizations, bodies, including the CST, the GM, NGOs and community-based organizations (CBOs).

35. Although cost-effectiveness has been repeatedly recommended in many submissions, no indications have been provided about the implications of limiting the number of representatives from country Parties at the meetings of the CRIC.

36. One comment shows a preference for a CRIC bureau composed of five members who represent regional groups and are experienced in the process of the UNCCD and the implementation review process. In order to involve all Parties in the work of the CRIC and to facilitate rotation among regional groups, the members of the CRIC bureau would serve a two-year term. The five members of the bureau of the CRIC would take office at the meeting at which they were elected. However, the Chairman of the CRIC would be elected at a plenary meeting of the Conference of the Parties.

5. Criteria and methodology for conducting the review

37. As noted in most submissions, the workings of a CRIC should be organized according to a thematic (rather than regional) approach, with a view to facilitating informal technical exchange on key issues. Another Party believes that country reviews take too much time to permit a full review of all reports. Therefore, the breakdown of review by regional groupings excludes full participation of the Parties and relevant organizations in any single review and/or meeting.

38. National reports submitted by Parties and reports by relevant institutions would continue to constitute the basis of the implementation review process. However, in order to facilitate discussions, the information provided would be synthesized and consolidated according to selected themes.

39. Another contribution proposes that an in-depth review of country national action programmes, and subregional action programme reviews, should take place at relevant subregional meetings. This type of review would allow sharing of information and lesso.s learned on a subregional basis.

40. Some submissions recommended the use of pertinent, quantifiable and readily verifiable benchmarks and indicators in reviewing national reports. All submissions recognized the role of the CST and the GM in the review process. One Party called for information from the CST and the GM to be received on a written basis before each session of the CRIC. However, no detailed procedures were suggested for this option.

6. Frequency of meetings

41. A number of Parties believe that meetings or sessions of a subsidiary body for implementation should be organized in parallel with the ordinary sessions of the Conference of the Parties. Due to the quantity of reports for review at COP meetings, others propose inter-sessional meetings so that questions on implementation can be discussed in a more efficient manner and more extensively.

42. One Party proposed a tentative programme of work divided into themes, that is, desertification prevention, rehabilitation of degraded lands, tropical ecosystems, temperate ecosystems and small island States.

7. Outcome

43. There is broad agreement that the outcome of the review process would be a comprehensive report along the lines of the AHWG report. It would highlight key achievements and challenges, including recommendations for enhancing implementation. This report, along with other analytical work on implementation, would be transmitted to the COP for approval.

8. Financial implications

44. Some submissions show preference for a cost-effective body for implementation, particularly when considering the logistical parameters of the body, such as frequency of meetings, and location and length of sessions and bureau meetings. Consequently, and as recalled by one submission, the establishment of a formal additional subsidiary body would have some financial implications, as it necessitates a functioning bureau.

9. Role of the secretariat

45. Parties affirm that the secretariat should, within its general mandate, compile and transmit reports submitted to it, compile the results of the regionally reviewed reports, and submit these with the comments from the CST and the GM to the COP.

46. In addition to the tasks defined in decision 11/COP.1, the secretariat would also undertake some preliminary analysis of reports submitted to the COP and propose working documents to be used as a basis for discussion. This document might provide a framework for regional and subregional analysis and the identification of the prominent themes and/or sectoral issues, as well as a lessons-learned section for review.

Annex

DRAFT TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR A COMMITTEE TO REVIEW THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CONVENTION (CRIC)

A. Establishment

1. Pursuant to article 22, paragraph 2 (a), (c) and (d) of the Convention, a committee to review the implementation of the Convention (CRIC) is hereby established as a standing subsidiary body of the Conference of the Parties to assist it in regularly reviewing the implementation of the Convention.

B. Mandate and functions

2. The Committee shall assist the Conference of the Parties in regularly reviewing the implementation of the Convention, in the light of the experience gained at the national, subregional, regional and international levels, ans shall facilitate the exchange of information on measures adopted by the parties pursuant to article 26 of the Convention, in order to draw conclusions and propose concrete recommendations on further steps in the implementation of the Convention. Particularly, it shall:

(a) Analyse in-depth reports submitted to the Conference of the Parties and information provided by the Committee on Science and Technology and the Global Mechanism consistent with their respective mandates in order to draw conclusions and propose concrete recommendations on further steps in the implementation of the Convention;

(b) Address problems stemming from poor implementation of agreed measures;

(c) Identify any need for adjustments to action programmes, projects and activities;

(d) Contribute to maintain an institutional record of emerging and difficult issues deriving from implementation;

(e) Provide an assessment of the financial resources and other support received by affected developing countries towards the achievement of the objectives of the Convention;

(f) Inform donors and the international community about the use of resources and other support provided to affected developing countries for implementation of the Convention;

(g) Recommend ways and means of improving procedures for communication of information and the quality of reports submitted to the Conference of the Parties;

(h) Propose comprehensive procedures and mechanisms for achieving full and effective implementation of the Convention.

C. Composition

3. The Committee shall be composed of:

(a) Representatives of those affected country Parties reporting to the session of the Conference of the Parties;

(b) Representatives of developed country Parties;

(c) Designated representatives from regional and interested groups;

(d) The Chairperson of the Committee on Science and Technology;

(e) A representative of the Global Mechanism.

4. Any other body or agency, whether national or international, governmental or non-governmental, which wishes to be represented at a meeting of the Committee as an observer may be admitted unless one third of the Parties present at the session object.

5. The Committee shall elect its own four Vice-Chairpersons, of whom one shall act as Rapporteur. Together with the Chairperson, elected by the Conference of the Parties in accordance with rule 31 of the rules of procedure, they shall constitute the Bureau. The Chairperson and the Vice-Chairpersons shall be elected with due regard to the need to ensure equitable geographical distribution and adequate representation of affected country Parties, particularly those in Africa, and shall not serve for more than two consecutive terms. One of the Vice-Chairperson shall be the Chairperson of the Committee on Science and Technology. The Chairperson of the CRIC shall be a member of the Bureau of the Conference of the Parties.

6. The Bureau of the Committee shall be responsible for following up the work of the Committee between meetings.

D. Frequency of meetings and organization of work

7. Meetings of the Committee shall be held in conjunction with and between the ordinary sessions of the Conference of the Parties. Extraordinary meetings of the Committee shall be held at such times as may be decided by the Conference of the Parties.

8. Meetings of the Committee shall be public, unless the Committee decides otherwise.

9. The programme of work of the Committee, which should include estimates regarding financial implications, shall be approved by the Conference of the Parties. At the beginning of each of its sessions, the Committee shall adopt its agenda and the organization of work for the session.

10. The provisional agenda shall include, as appropriate:

(a) A review of the reports from Parties and observers pursuant to decision 11/COP.1, paragraphs 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 and 9;

(b) A review of information from the Committee on Science and Technology and the Global Mechanism pursuant to decision 11/COP.1, paragraphs 18 and 19;

(c) Any other item pertaining to the review of the implementation of the Convention.

E. Nature of the review process and methodology

11. The review operated by the Committee shall be an open, formal, inclusive, flexible and transparent process. It shall be an experience-sharing and lessons-learning exercise to improve implementation of the Convention, and not a compliance system.

12. The Committee shall examine reports submitted by Parties as well as by relevant organs, funds and programmes of the United Nations system and other intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations and such other reports as the Conference of the Parties may call for.

13. The review shall be conducted geographically (by regions and subregions) and thematically (key themes and measures identified in the Convention), unless otherwise decided by the Conference of the Parties. The Committee may consider using implementation indicators as outlined, *inter alia*, in documents ICCD/COP(2)/CST/3 and A/AC.241/INF.4.

F. Outcome

14. The Committee shall report regularly to the Conference of the Parties on its work, including at each of its ordinary sessions.

15. The report by the Committee shall constitute the basis of the review of implementation by the Conference of the Parties.

G. Transparency of work

16. The results of the work of the Committee shall be in the public domain.

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UNITED
NATIONS

Convention to Combat
Desertification

Distr.
GENERAL

ICCD/COP(5)/3/Add.2
3 September 2001

ENGLISH
Original: ENGLISH/SPANISH

CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES
Fifth session
Geneva, 1-12 October 2001
Item 7 (c) of the provisional agenda

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CONVENTION

SYNTHESIS OF THE REPORT ON WAYS OF IMPROVING THE EFFICIENCY AND EFFECTIVENESS OF THE COMMITTEE ON SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

Note by the secretariat

Addendum

GE.01-64195 (E) 040901 060901

CONTENTS

		Paragraphs	Page
I.	INTRODUCTION	1 - 3	3
II.	BACKGROUND	4 - 8	3
III.	SYNTHESIS OF SUBMISSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS	9 - 36	4
	A. Need for reform	13 - 14	4
	B. Size	15 - 16	5
	C. Composition and mandate	17 - 18	5
	D. Representation and composition of the CST's ad hoc panels	19 - 21	5
	E. Proposed options	22 - 26	5
	F. Budget implications	27 - 29	7
	G. Programme of work	30 - 36	7
IV.	CONCLUSIONS	37 - 48	8

Annex

I	Summary of discussions and list of participants from the regional consultations meeting on improving the efficiency and effectiveness of the Committee on Science and Technology	10
II	Contributions from Parties on improving the efficiency and effectiveness of the Committee on Science and Technology	12

I. INTRODUCTION

1. At the fourth session of the Conference of the Parties (COP) discussions were held among participants regarding the functioning of the Committee on Science and Technology (CST). Recalling article 24 of the Convention, as well as decision 15/COP.1, the Conference of the Parties adopted decision 17/COP.4 on improving the efficiency and effectiveness of the CST.

2. According to this decision, Parties were encouraged to hold extensive consultations on ways of improving the efficiency and effectiveness of the CST, and to transmit their recommendations to the secretariat by 1 May 2001. The secretariat was requested to prepare a synthesis of those recommendations and to facilitate intensive consultations between the regional groups, to consist of two representatives per region, not later than September 2001, and to report to the Conference of the Parties at its fifth session. Consultations between the regional groups were held in Geneva, Switzerland, from 16 to 17 August 2001. As a result of these consultations, regional representatives suggested the options listed in annex I to be taken into consideration by the CST at COP 5.

3. Seven submissions were received from Parties and regional groups, namely Brazil, Canada, Chile, the Czech Republic, the European Union, the Group of 77 and China, and Switzerland. These submissions can be found in the annex II to this document.

II. BACKGROUND

4. According to article 24 of the Convention, as a subsidiary body of the Conference of the Parties, the mandate of the CST "is to provide it (the COP) with information and advice on scientific and technological matters relating to combating desertification and mitigating the effects of drought".

5. As stipulated in article 24, the CST "shall meet in conjunction with the ordinary sessions of the Conference of the Parties, and shall be multi-disciplinary and open to the participation of all Parties. It shall be composed of government representatives competent in the relevant fields of expertise".

6. In order to examine issues in greater detail, as outlined in paragraph 3 of article 24, the Conference of the Parties may, as necessary, appoint ad hoc panels "to provide it, through the CST, with information and advice on specific issues regarding the state of the art in fields of science and technology relevant to combating desertification and mitigating the effects of drought". Ad hoc panels are composed of experts whose names are taken from the roster of independent experts (ROE) for the UNCCD, taking into account the need for a multi-disciplinary approach and broad geographical representation.

7. According to paragraph 2 of article 24, Parties nominate to the ROE individuals with expertise and experience in relevant fields, taking into account the need for a multi-disciplinary approach and broad geographical representation. The criteria and procedures used to identify an

expert for nomination to the ROE differs from Party to Party. The number of nominations to the ROE also varies from Party to Party, since no minimum or maximum number has been identified by the Convention.

8. As agreed in decision 17/COP.1, the terms of reference and the modalities of work of ad hoc panels are approved by the Conference of the Parties, based upon recommendations of the CST; the number of members of any ad hoc panel shall not exceed twelve; in principle, the number of ad hoc panels shall not exceed three at any one time.

III. SYNTHESIS OF SUBMISSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

9. The need to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the CST is recognized by all Parties which have made submissions in accordance with decision 17/COP.4. In particular, Parties have raised specific concerns regarding: (i) the competence of participants in the CST, (ii) the political nature of discussions within the CST, rather than a focus on scientific and technological issues, (iii) the lack of continuity of representatives to the CST, and (iv) inadequate time within the agenda of the CST to allow for in-depth analysis and debate of the issues.

10. Concern has been expressed that the recommendations of the CST have not been sufficiently integrated into other Convention processes, including the implementation of national, subregional and regional action programmes, and thematic programming networks, as well as with other relevant subsidiary bodies, such as the Ad Hoc Working Group for the Review of Implementation of the UNCCD. The need to make the CST more relevant at the national and regional levels has also been highlighted.

11. The ability of the CST to provide sound technical advice to the COP on combating desertification and mitigating the effects of drought has also been raised. Two submissions cited the failure of Parties to establish and use benchmarks and indicators to monitor the implementation and impact of the Convention, as recommended by the CST, as an example of the lack of influence of the CST.

12. In addition, it has been noted that insufficient linkages have been made between the CST and the scientific and technical subsidiary bodies of other multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs).

A. Need for reform

13. While recognizing the need to improve the functioning of the CST, there is general agreement that the reform of the CST should be undertaken within its existing mandate, based on the terms contained in article 24 of the Convention. Based on the submissions received, Parties do not wish to reopen negotiations on the Convention, but rather to provide the CST with different mechanisms and tools to enable it to become more relevant to Parties and the COP, and to strengthen its contribution with regard to the implementation of the Convention.

14. A number of factors have been identified which contribute to the less than optimal functioning of the CST to date. Essentially, these are related to the size of the CST, its composition and mandate, and its representation.

B. Size

15. There is general agreement that participation in the CST should remain open to all Parties. However, it is recognized that because of its large size and the differing types and levels of expertise of participants, the CST faces difficulty in undertaking serious scientific debate and effective work planning.

16. Taking into account these circumstances, each submission has recognized the need for a smaller scientific and technical group to supplement and support the work of the CST, although there is no general consensus on the exact number of representatives that would be required. Based on various submissions, a range between 10 and 32 representatives has been suggested.

C. Composition and mandate

17. Parties have noted that many members of the CST are primarily policy advisers who have some scientific background, rather than scientists or researchers who are actively engaged in sectoral-specific research relevant to combating desertification and/or mitigating the effects of drought. It is for this reason that representatives have focused on policy and institutional process issues within the CST, rather than on "pure" scientific and technical issues.

18. While this could be viewed as a weakness, it is also one of the CST's strengths. Several of the submissions have suggested that the CST should become more of a policy research body, that it should become actively involved in the collection and analysis of information contained in national reports, and that the CST should strengthen its contribution to the review of the implementation of the Convention.

D. Representation and composition of the CST's ad hoc panels

19. There is general consensus that the composition of an ad hoc panel, based on nominations from the ROE, is often influenced more by concerns over regional representation than by the scientific or technical merit of the expert. As a result, the usefulness of ad hoc panels has been questioned, given that the analysis and recommendations of their reports to date seem to have had minimal impact on the implementation of the Convention.

20. It has also been noted that the process by which the roster has been developed has not been rigorous, resulting in a varying quality of scientific expertise.

21. There is no agreement with regard to whether ad hoc panels should continue to function according to the existing terms of reference.

E. Proposed options

22. One submission recommends that a core, smaller, permanent CST panel of experts be established, although the number of representatives is not quantified. This panel would be comprised of representatives currently nominated to the ROE; however, the submission identifies the need to institute a more rigorous process of selection of experts to the ROE, and notes that membership of the ROE should be subject to some peer review mechanism.

According to the paper, ad hoc panels would no longer be created by the CST, although they could be formed at the recommendation of the core panel of experts. The submission does not specifically address whether membership of the panel of experts would be based on regional representation.

23. Another submission proposes that "a CST task force should be established to oversee and coordinate issues within its mandate in order to coordinate the work of the ad hoc panels and prepare for the COP". Four ad hoc panels, consisting of five/six people per panel, would be established, each with a specific responsibility as follows: (i) knowledge, (ii) impact, (iii) mitigation, and (iv) results. Each panel would identify a coordinator "to collect and disseminate the information". The task force would be composed of the sum of the four panels, constituting some 30 representatives. Membership of panels would continue on the basis of regional representation. The need to update or revise the ROE to complement the task force approach is also noted.

24. The establishment of a "high-level experts and scientists group on desertification and drought" is recommended in a separate submission. The experts group would consist of a maximum of 32 experts and scientists, distributed among the five regional groups within the United Nations system as follows: 8 from Africa, 7 from Asia, 6 from Latin America and the Caribbean, 6 from Western Europe and other States, and 5 from Central and Eastern Europe. It is proposed that the UNCCD secretariat would nominate representatives to the experts group from the ROE, in close consultation with members of the CST Bureau and the chairpersons of the five regional groups. The submission also suggests that at least one expert or scientist from civil society, in particular from non-governmental organizations, would be selected from each regional group. The experts group would report to the CST; the CST would be responsible for drafting explicit terms of reference for the experts group, which would subsequently be considered by the COP for adoption. The experts group would meet at least once a year, before the ordinary sessions of the COP.

25. Two submissions refer to the need to make the CST more relevant to, and better integrated into, the national and regional levels. One of these submissions proposes the establishment of a "permanent work group" of the CST, which would consist of the five regional groups within the United Nations system. Two or three representatives would be elected to each regional group during regional meetings; the submission does not address the link, if any, with the ROE. In total, the permanent work group would consist of 10-15 representatives, and would act as an interlocutor and monitor between respective regions and the CST. The need to develop a short-term to medium-term work plan with clear commitments to the CST by the Parties and other relevant organizations was mentioned in the submission.

26. Another submission proposes replacing the advice provided by ad hoc panels by policy research contracted out to external specialized institutions; however, the same submission recognizes the need for an independent scientific panel, meeting outside the COP, to act as a scientific monitoring and advocacy body. It is proposed that this independent scientific panel would undertake its work in the form of an international conference, and the results would be shared with the COP and the public. This option suggests that the CST would have a shorter agenda and complete its work at the COP within one and a half days.

F. Budget implications

27. Three of the submissions address the subject of the possible budget implications of reforming the means by which the CST carries out its existing mandate. The proposal to create a CST task force is based on the assumption that the current budget allocation for the CST should be sufficient for the reformed CST activities.

28. According to one submission, the financial implications of the meeting of the expert group should be reflected in the regular budget of the Convention, while noting that voluntary contributions should be sought to ensure the participation of experts from developing countries.

29. One submission notes that the current CST programme of work has been delayed because it is dependent upon voluntary support, and proposes that, in order to achieve improvements in the efficiency and effectiveness of the CST, core financial support is required. This could be "in the form of administrative and incentive financing, as well as communication and publishing budgets". The submission proposes that the secretariat be tasked with exploring what type of financing would be required in order for a smaller, permanent panel of experts to become a "competitive and credible" scientific entity; it also suggests that the cost savings of holding the CST in conjunction with the COP must be re-evaluated.

G. Programme of work

30. It has been proposed that the programme of work of the CST may need to be revisited, given the proposed changes with regard to the functioning of specialized groups within the Convention. There has also been a suggestion that the duration of a CST meeting in conjunction with the COP could be shortened, if a smaller scientific group were established.

31. One submission encourages the CST to consider adopting innovative scientific networking approaches for advancing the programme of work of the CST, where possible, such as through the creation of a consortium of institutions to tackle specific issues; this approach was used to undertake phase 1 of the survey and evaluation of existing networks, institutions, agencies and bodies involved in combating desertification and mitigating the effects of drought.

32. Another submission encourages the use of modern means of communication for the exchange of information and to minimize the need for face-to-face meetings.

33. The need to ensure that the public has access to the results produced by the CST and its specialized groups has also been noted.

34. Two submissions have noted the need for the CST to become more active with regard to the review of the implementation of the UNCCD. One suggests that scientific and technical issues raised during the implementation review process should be fed into the work programme of the CST and vice versa, "either by connecting the two processes, including scheduling their meetings one after the other, or requesting the participation of designated representatives from each, in the other forums". Given that the CST has requested Parties to provide more

information on the scientific and technological aspects of implementation, such information to be incorporated into the national reports, according to a second submission, the CST "should look for further possibilities of collecting and analysing this information".

35. One submission suggests that the CST should, in the framework of its advisory functions, summarize and, where necessary, "convert the latest international scientific, technological, technical, socio-economic and other information" on the global situation or status of desertification and drought provided by the experts group into forms appropriate for the needs of the COP. The CST would regularly compile and synthesize this type of information and data, as well as information on the latest developments in science and technology, and assess the implications for the implementation of the Convention; in addition, the CST would "formulate concrete requests through the COP, to competent international scientific and technical or technological bodies".

36. With regard to other multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs), it is advised that the smaller "core" panel of experts should work closely with the respective subsidiary scientific bodies of MEAs, in particular with the Climate Change and Biodiversity conventions, in identifying concrete items for the joint programmes of work.

IV. CONCLUSIONS

37. While recognizing the need to improve the functioning of the CST, there is general agreement that the reform of the CST should be made within its existing mandate, as described in article 24 of the Convention. There is also general agreement that participation in the CST should remain open to all Parties, but that there is a need to establish a smaller scientific and technical group to supplement and support the work of the CST. A variety of names have been proposed for this smaller scientific group, which would report directly to the CST.

38. Although there is no general agreement on the number of representatives that would be required, a range of between 10 and 32 representatives has been recommended, based on various submissions.

39. There is a general consensus that nominations to the smaller scientific group would be based on geographical representation, using the accepted regional groupings of the United Nations system, but there is no consensus about the number of representatives per region.

40. Several of the submissions have highlighted the need to revise the process for identification of experts to the ROE, instituting a more rigorous process to ensure the nomination of highly-qualified and internationally-recognized scientists. The majority of submissions propose that nominations to the smaller scientific group be drawn from the ROE.

41. However, there is no agreement with regard to the process used to select the experts from the ROE: through election at regional meetings, by nomination from the UNCCD secretariat in consultation with the CST Bureau and the chairpersons of the five regional groups, or by nomination through the CST Bureau and/or the chairpersons of the regional groups.

42. None of the submissions have recommended the length of term to be served by members of the smaller scientific group. With the exception of one submission, which proposes that the scientific group would need to meet at least once a year before the ordinary sessions of the COP, the matter of when the scientific group should meet, and how often, has not been addressed. With the establishment of a smaller scientific group, the duration of the CST meetings within the COP may be affected.

43. The majority of submissions recommend that the work of the smaller scientific group should be included under the core budget of the UNCCD secretariat.

44. There is no general agreement on whether ad hoc panels should continue to function according to the existing terms of reference.

45. The majority of the submissions recommend that innovative means, such as electronic mail, be employed by members of the smaller scientific group for communicating and the exchange of information, thereby reducing the need for face-to-face meetings.

46. With regard to the programme of work of the CST, the majority of the submissions have highlighted the need for the CST to become more involved in the implementation of the Convention, including its review processes, as well as to play a greater role in the collection and analysis of information and data contained in national reports.

47. There is also general agreement that the advisory functions of the CST to the COP should be strengthened, to ensure that the COP bases its decisions to combat desertification and mitigate the effects of drought on the most up to date scientific and technological information available.

48. Several of the submissions have recommended that concrete linkages between the CST and the scientific and technical subsidiary bodies of other MEAs should be established.

Annex I

SUMMARY OF DISCUSSIONS AND LIST OF PARTICIPANTS FROM THE REGIONAL CONSULTATIONS MEETING ON IMPROVING THE EFFICIENCY AND EFFECTIVENESS OF THE COMMITTEE ON SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

In response to decision 17/COP.4, Parties were encouraged to hold extensive consultations on ways of improving the efficiency and effectiveness of the CST, and to transmit their recommendations to the secretariat, which was requested to prepare a synthesis of the recommendations. The secretariat was also requested to facilitate intensive consultations between the regional groups, to consist of two representatives per region, not later than September 2001, and to report to the Conference of the Parties at its fifth session.

In accordance with this decision, consultations between the regional groups were held in Geneva, Switzerland, from 16 to 17 August 2001, at which time document ICCD/COP(5)/3/Add.2 was considered. As a result of these consultations, regional representatives suggested that the following options be taken into consideration by the CST at COP 5:

(1) there is a need to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the CST in accordance with the spirit and the letter of the convention;

(2) the reform of the CST should be considered within its existing mandate;

(3) under the authority of the CST, [a group of high-level experts] [a task force composed of the sum total of the ad hoc panels] in the area of combating desertification and mitigating the effects of drought should be established;

(4) the programme of work of the [group of experts] [task force composed of the ad hoc panels] should be pluri-annual in nature [3 years minimum, 5 years maximum] [4-6 years];

(5) the composition of the [group of experts] [task force composed of the ad hoc panels] should be limited to [21] [25] members;

(6) the composition of the [group of experts] [task force composed of the ad hoc panels] should be based on an [equitable] [equal] geographical distribution;

(7) the experts should be selected from the roster of independent experts by the CST Bureau, in consultation with the regional groups and the secretariat; the selection of experts should be finalized by the Bureau of COP 5 at the latest [three months after the conclusion of the meeting of the CST]; the competence of the experts presented by each regional group will be determined on the basis of a curriculum vitae, which should include a paper on a specific issue contained in the programme of work;

(8) the programme of work of the [group of experts] [task force composed of the ad hoc panels] and the terms of reference should be defined by the CST [based on themes, activities and issues of relevance to the convention] [using four approaches: knowledge; impact; mitigation; results];

(9) the [group of experts] [task force composed of the ad hoc panels] should use existing means of communication, such as through electronic means, face-to-face meetings, etc.;

(10) the [group of experts] [task force composed of the ad hoc panels] should meet at least once per year [for one week];

(11) the duration of the meeting of the CST should remain unchanged;

(12) the financial implications of the activities of the [group of experts] [task force composed of the ad hoc panels] should come from the regular budget; in order to maintain the independent nature of the [group of experts] [task force composed of the ad hoc panels], the participation costs of all the members should be covered, regardless of whether the member comes from a developed or developing country; a decision will only be made when all financial considerations have been taken into account;

(13) the CST should play a role in the review of national reports, using the synthesis and summaries of the reports prepared by the secretariat ;

(14) there is a need to better integrate the activities of the CST into national and regional activities;

(15) CST representatives need to play a more active liaison role between the CST's activities and those of the regional groups, as well as during the review of national reports.

List of participants

Dr. Olanrewaju B. Smith (Canada)

Mr. Mebrahtu Iyassu (Eritrea)

Mr. Rodolfo Martinez Luna (Mexico)

Ambassador Marc Gedopt (Belgium)

Ambassador Rogatien Biaou (Benin)

Ms. Dagmar Kubinova (Czech Republic)

Mr. Juan Torres Guevara (Peru)

Mr. Khaled Al-Shara'a (Syrian Arab Republic)

Mr. Hama Arba Diallo (UNCCD)

Mr. Ahmed Cissoko (UNCCD)

Ms. Jan Sheltinga (UNCCD)

Annex II

CONTRIBUTIONS FROM PARTIES ON IMPROVING THE EFFICIENCY AND EFFECTIVENESS OF THE COMMITTEE ON SCIENCE AND TECHNOL0GY

In response to decision 17/COP.4, seven submissions were received from Parties, namely Brazil, Canada, Chile, the Czech Republic, the European Union, the Group of 77 and China, and Switzerland.

1. BRAZIL

Regarding the decision on improving the efficiency and effectiveness of the Committee on Science and Technology, the Brazilian Government suggests that the Committee consider carrying out researches in the field of social psychology in order to assess the factors that may have an influence on the behaviour of the population of dry regions and how to promote changes in their habits and mentality with a view to fostering sustainable development.

2. CANADA

The mandate and modalities of the Committee on Science and Technology (CST) of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) are established in article 23 of the Convention, and in various subsequent decisions, particularly decision 15/COP.1 The purpose of the CST is to contribute sound scientific advice and knowledge which can inform decisions of the COP and of Parties in their implementation of the Convention.

Some interest has emerged on the need to further refine and rationalize activities of the CST in order to make a more effective contribution to Convention implementation. As an outcome of COP 4 (Bonn, Germany - December 2000), Parties adopted decision 17/COP.4, which encourages Parties to consider ways of improving the efficiency and effectiveness of the CST, and to transmit their recommendations to the secretariat by May 2001. In addition, decisions on the work programme of the CST, ongoing activities of its ad hoc panels (decisions 10/COP.4 to 16/COP.4) as well as the deliberations of the CST Bureau reflected this desire for reflection.

In terms of timing, a review of the work and modalities of the CST is opportune, as it occurs in parallel to discussions on the creation of institutional measures for implementation review of the UNCCD. As well, Parties are considering how to maintain the momentum of the Convention in light of the transition of the COP from an annual to a biennial event. These, if taken together, provide an opportunity to not only improve the CST's effectiveness, but also rationalize its contribution to the overall success of Convention processes and implementation.

CST effectiveness and efficiency

CST's effectiveness can only be measured by a quality assessment of whether it succeeds in achieving results; whether the outcome of its deliberations is impacting on Convention processes and implementation; and whether the CST provides sound technical advice and knowledge of value to the Convention process and its bodies. Consideration, therefore, of its

work programme and of the procedures for productive exchange between the CST, the COP and other ad hoc bodies and convention instruments (such as the Ad Hoc Working Group for Review of Implementation and the Global Mechanism) are key. Determining the efficiency of the CST is a very difficult assessment to make. In part it must be based on a cost-benefit analysis, on how well resources are being used. In addition, processes of participation and the scientific and technical competence of members of the Committee and its bodies (for example the Bureau, the Roster of Experts, panels) must also be taken into account. Efficiency relates not only to financial input but also to the efficient investment of the time and minds of human resources toward the desired output.

Even a very brief analysis of the effectiveness and efficiency of the CST identifies a variety of problems in terms of its operation and functioning including: politicization of processes; generalization and superficiality of discussion (both in its own deliberations and that of panels); lack of focus and over-extension of the programme of work; slow progress on the scientific and technical elaboration of identified issues; and the inability to produce actual "products" with direct relevance to inform policy and implementation processes. However, these are in fact largely symptomatic: upon closer scrutiny these challenges hinge on more fundamental structural problems of the CST related to size, representation and the technical composition of the Committee and its other bodies.

Challenges to the CST

Size

The Convention stipulates that participation in the CST is open to all Parties. This has resulted in a large and often unwieldy body. At the time of the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee on Desertification (INCD) negotiations, the prospect of this was raised as a concern. The idea of a limited participation was discussed but was not deemed possible as the alternative led to debate on criteria of composition and issues of regional representation. Since entry into force, experience has demonstrated that, because of its large size, the CST is experiencing real difficulty in undertaking serious scientific debate and effective work planning. Essentially, the large CST suffers from processes which result in its having to arrive at the lowest common denominator position. This presents a serious hindrance to the CST providing quality advice to the Convention.

Cost and frequency

Another aspect which arose in the context of early CST negotiations related to the cost consideration of large versus small scientific bodies. While it was recognized that the costs of a full-participation CST meeting would be significant, it was deemed manageable if the CST was held on a yearly basis, in parallel to the COP. CST costs would be absorbed by the overall COP budget and voluntary fund contributions for least developed country Parties participation. The alternative, a smaller, dedicated scientific body, was perceived to have higher costs likely necessitating earmarked core budget funding. In addition, it was feared that a smaller body of experts, constituted to undertake actual scientific and technical work over the course of the year,

would require regular inter-sessional meetings in order to inform the COP. Therefore the assumption was that a small body would result in significant additional participation and travel costs.

While, the cost-saving assumptions about a parallel CST/COP may well have been valid in the INCD 10 through COP 3 period, COP 5 marks the beginning of biennial meetings. Biennial meetings of the CST will present serious challenges to continuity and the effective management of the scientific and technical work of the CST in the inter-sessional period. Parties should re-evaluate the cost savings versus effectiveness and efficiency losses in light of this transition.

Composition and representation

The composition of the CST, its Bureau, and the nomination process of its ad hoc panels, presents real challenges to the effectiveness and efficiency of CST operations. Specifically, this is centred on the United Nations custom of guaranteeing regional representation on bodies of this nature, in effect ensuring that they are large, cumbersome (and often, as an additional side effect, highly politicized). Of course, the alternative selective participation involves some trade-offs in terms of transparency, more limited learning and dissemination potential, and is contrary to established United Nations representation processes as established in other conventions processes.

The idea of a small, selective CST was considered during the course of negotiations, but was not successfully defended in light of the stronger "cost" and "representation" arguments which sought a full participation CST. However, this discussion was not adequately addressed as it was always framed in an "either-or" instead of an "and" scenario. In fact, cost concerns aside, a small, supplementary scientific body, mandated to inform the full CST, could contribute greatly to ensuring the CST's effectiveness and efficiency.

Expertise

In terms of expertise, it is fair to say that the CST is not a scientific body. This is because true scientific debate is not currently taking place in this venue. This is largely due to the level of expertise of participants, and relates back to size, composition as well as the format of United Nations style deliberations.

CST representatives are government delegates selected to represent and advance national interests of a scientific and technical nature. While these delegates have some scientific background, they tend to be policy advisors with generalist knowledge of the issues. This is particularly true in the case of small delegations which, because the COP and CST meet in parallel, are comprised of generalists capable of covering both (this is the only option as the alternative is to de facto be excluded from one or the other). Consequently, many delegations lack the expertise to engage in substantive scientific debate in this forum and therefore concentrate their attention on policy and institutional process issues within the CST.

Style and format of deliberations

The CST operates under the same parameters as the COP in terms of rules of procedure and protocol which forces it to be a process forum and hinders it from engaging in constructive, substantive debate about science issues. For all intents and purposes, the CST is effectively a scientifically enlightened political decision-making body.

Challenges to the mechanics of the CST

The combined constraints outlined above have resulted in the CST having to develop and rely on a roster of experts and scientific panels as well as various ad hoc processes in order to achieve substantive discussion. However, the effectiveness and efficiency of these mechanisms are in turn constrained by the very challenges which face the CST.

Roster of Experts (ROE)

Currently the CST relies on scientific and technical expertise available to it through a roster of experts. Unfortunately, the process by which the ROE has been developed has not been rigorous. Nominations to the ROE are entirely at the discretion of Parties, and while some Parties have national procedures for selection of candidates, many nominations are unvetted, resulting in the overall level and quality of scientific expertise on the ROE being unverified and inconsistent.

Ad hoc panels of experts

Ad hoc panels are tasked to tackle issues through special studies in order to provide information back to the CST.

To date there have been three such panels and their usefulness is debatable. One problem is that the process by which these panels are constituted gives more weight to considerations of representation than of scientific and technical merit. At best the various panels can be commended for successfully generating reports on the requested theme. However, the utility of these is questionable given that their submission to the CST generates no discussion or debate, and there is little or no subsequent action. More importantly, the analysis and recommendations of these reports have no direct or indirect impact on implementation. We need look no further than the extent to which Parties have identified and used benchmarks and indicators in their national reporting as a litmus test of panel/CST influence.

Both the ROE and the panels of the CST are fundamentally handicapped because they are little known in the scientific community and their products go unpublished and unread outside of the COP. It is perceived that participation will result in significant professional investment and, in the case of developed country nominations, financial costs, with little or no professional benefits to entice senior scientific engagement.

Other ad hoc substantive processes

In part as a result of the limitations of the CST, ROE and panel processes, other approaches for advancing the work of the CST have been evolving. Specifically, CST work programme activities have been commissioned to specialized consortiums, groups or consultants (for example, the survey and evaluation of existing networks and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) led consortium), specialized bodies (for example Italian institution and the technical knowledge theme), or specialized institutions (for example, indicators and benchmarks work by the Permanent Interstate Committee for Drought Control in the Sahel (CILSS)). These trends are very ad hoc but the flexibility and the partnership building approach which is inherent in these alternatives is encouraging. These scientific networking approaches are building and reinforcing the framework for a credible core of scientific knowledge to support the CST and will result in the dissemination of knowledge to the wider audience.

Unfortunately, because of their ad hoc nature, these initiatives are largely unfunded, or must rely on voluntary funding which is unreliable. This has not proved to be a sustainable method for the CST to do business.

Voluntary funding for CST subsidiary panels and initiatives

Unfortunately, these challenges to the CST have resulted in an apparent financial crisis. From the start donors have been cautious about supporting the work of the CST, their hesitation has been reinforced for the various reasons outlined above. The CST programme of work, reliant largely on voluntary support, has as a result been delayed. For example, phase II of the survey and evaluation of existing networks initiative approved at COP 4 is a casualty of these doubts, having to date obtained no voluntary financial support for implementation. This is unfortunate as funding failure casts further doubts on the overall credibility of the CST processes including its ability to effectively identify future programmes of work.

Work programme

In order to address these critical doubts, and achieve real relevance, the CST must identify in its work programme ways to influence and make critical contribution to the implementation of the Convention and to ensure that the critical scientific and technical linkages are being made to and influence the other related multilateral environmental agreements forums.

Naturally, a first step must involve a direct role of the CST in processes for review of implementation. However, to date, the CST has not done so. Rather, identifying items for programme of work have been pro forma, that is issues and themes specifically referenced in the Convention text (benchmarks and indicators, traditional knowledge, early warning systems, etc.). While these themes are relevant to dryland development, even on these it is not clear that the CST contribution has advanced understanding, let alone influenced the implementation of parties on these issues. The future of the CST hinges on two issues: demonstrating topical relevance and contributing to the learning-based processes of the Convention.

Topical relevance and a learning-based process

At COP 4, the CST had its first opportunity to explore what additional topics it should address for its future programme of work. Unfortunately, discussion was sadly lacking on this item. We see decision 16/COP.4 encouraging further monitoring of existing CST programme items (early warning, traditional knowledge and benchmarks and indicators) with the addition of one other new initiative related to identifying "strategies for the communication of information and its use to generate best practices for combating desertification and mitigating the effects of drought". Sadly, while an interesting issue, this proposed work item would appear to be strategically disconnected from the exercise that was under way in parallel at COP 4, the Ad Hoc Working Group on review of implementation (AHWG).

The meetings of the AHWG, although certainly not perfect, have demonstrated that substantive discussion can be achieved, provided the right players are at the table and that the discussion is well structured. Parties to the Convention have now witnessed the benefits of an issue-driven, learning-based process, including the potential influence this process can have to inform, and be informed by, the CST.

Captured by the excellent analytical contributions of the Chairperson and Vice-Chairpersons of the CST which were included in the AHWG Co-Chairmen's report, critical scientific and technical issues were raised in these discussions. This process demonstrated their topical relevance and the need to address them provides real mandate for the CST to include them in their future programme of work.

The challenge now before the COP 5/CST must be to take up these scientific and technical issues, as they were identified by the AHWG, and develop policy directions which will ensure that the necessary items and programme of work are identified, strategically planned for, and implemented in an effective and efficient manner, including identifying processes by which to ensure feed-back to the affected countries to assist in their implementation.

Recommendations

(i) It would be very difficult and inadvisable to reopen the Convention in order to restrict the open participation in the CST. Parties must therefore seek opportunities to provide the CST with additional structure and tools in order to better inform its discussion and direct its decision-making functions (see below).

(ii) In response to the effectiveness and efficiency challenges faced by such a large body, there is sufficient evidence to suggest that a smaller body would be better able to develop an innovation and challenge function to the Convention.

(iii) It is time to re-evaluate assumptions about the cost savings of parallel COP/CST annual meetings and weigh them against the very real likelihood of losses in the inter-sessional period resulting from inefficiencies of biennial CST work programme implementation as well as the overall costs of a cumbersome and

therefore ineffective full participation CST. Parties should again consider the option of a smaller scientific and technical body to undertake work to supplement and support the CST.

(iv) A full participation, regionally representative CST could remain the scientific and technical decision body with revised objectives better suited to its composition i.e. to provide scientific and technically-based policy advice to the COP.

(v) Assuming that for all intents and purposes, the CST is effectively a scientifically enlightened political decision-making body, the current level of expertise on the committee is sufficient. However, the CST must be provided with sound technical advice and scientific capacity to advance its work.

(vi) In order to do so, the CST should begin to explore what mechanism could be put in place in order for it to establish and be informed by exogenous scientific knowledge of a core, smaller permanent CST panel of experts.

It is understood that this would require core financial support. It is assumed that this would be in the form of administrative and incentive financing, as well as communication and publishing budgets. The secretariat should be tasked to explore what this kind of dedicated body might require in the way of financing in order to be a "competitive and credible" scientific entity.

(vii) This panel could be comprised of representatives currently nominated to the roster of experts. However, the long-term success of this reform would be reliant on the ROE selection process becoming more rigorous to ensure cutting-edge scientific and technical expertise.

(viii) Experts membership should be subject to some peer review mechanism to ensure top-notch contribution. One option would be to require members to prepare in writing in advance contributions for the consideration of other members and presentation at panel meetings.

(ix) These specific contributions could be acknowledged in Convention CST proceedings. Further, the CST should actively encourage contributors to disseminate their research further including through other publications and related scientific forums.

(x) In the event of the creation of a core CST panel, ad hoc panels would no longer be created by the CST, though they might be formed at the recommendation of the core.

(xi) Innovative scientific networking approaches for advancing programme of work should be encouraged by the CST whenever possible. The Convention's science core should actively encourage the creation of consortia and other innovative approaches as it will build, reinforce and expand the credible scientific drylands expertise and knowledge.

(xii) With regard to other MEAs, particularly the Biodiversity and Climate Change Conventions, the CST, through the active engagement of its core panel, should be working to identify concrete items for joint programmes of work.

A thorough examination of the CST's work programme should be undertaken in light of discussions within the COP and its other subsidiary bodies. Specifically, scientific and technical issues raised during the implementation review process should be fed into the work programme of the CST and vice versa, either by connecting the two processes (including scheduling their meetings one after the other) or requesting the participation of designated representatives from each, in the other forums.

3. CHILE

The Committee on Science and Technology is considered one of the major vectors for the development and progress of implementation of UNCCD at the regional, subregional and national levels.

CST is the body that summarizes, channels and disseminates updated information on possible implementation measures within the countries, in terms of both traditional and cutting-edge technologies, both of which are indispensable to the development of initiatives to halt desertification processes.

In the light of the above, and in response to the request for contributions, Chile makes the following proposal:

(a) Identification of priority topics for consideration by CST

This matter should be discussed at the regional meetings and CST should be informed of regional positions, so that the issue can finally be resolved at the next Conference of the Parties. Implementation difficulties have arisen within countries in dealing with indicators and benchmarks, traditional technologies and in other areas of similar importance, and the situation should be analysed in the regional meetings and at the COPs.

(b) Formalization of a programme of work

Identification of priority topics should be linked to minimum goals for CST and the countries, with technical and financial support from the relevant bodies. Chile suggests, therefore, that short-term (COP 5-COP 6) and medium-term programmes of work should be prepared, on the basis of commitments by the various bodies involved:

- Committee on Science and Technology
- Subregional programmes/projects
- Selected countries on specific topics

- Financial and/or technical support from multilateral organizations for each of the initiatives adopted.

(c) Working group

CST, as the document rightly suggests, should have a standing working group, with regional representation, to act as interlocutor and evaluator between the respective regions and CST. Each regional group could consist of two or three people, to be elected by the regional meetings. The regional groups together would then constitute the CST working group.

4. CZECH REPUBLIC

Referring to the implementation of decision 17/COP.4 concerning the improvement of the efficiency and effectiveness of the Committee on Science and Technology (CST), the Parties to the UNCCD from the Central and Eastern European (CEE) region are in favour of closer cooperation with other multilateral environmental agreements, mainly with the CBD, UNFCCC and regional agreements to harmonize thematic programmes, to promote the idea and practice of integrated projects with assured multiply effects and to reach a consensus on joint indicators demonstrating the synergy between these three main Rio conventions.

The Parties to the UNCCD from the CEE region support the role of the CST as an independent scientific subsidiary body of the Conference of the Parties, composed of the best world experts, elaborating recommendations for political decisions of the Conference. It could be rather useful to make the CST closer to the regional and national levels by organizing, in the period between the Conferences of the Parties, the regional meetings of the CST reflecting, in more complex basis, interlinkages with the activities of relevant subsidiary bodies (scientific and technology) of other global conventions and regional agreements.

For the majority of the CEE region countries not so affected by direct desertification but faced by land degradation and so on, the major tasks are, inter alia, to establish and maintain the optimum proportions of arable land, meadows, pastures, forests and water areas in accordance with the principles of sustainable development and the capacity of the environment, to decrease over-cultivation of agricultural land through selective afforestation, bio-corridors or establishment of grasslands.

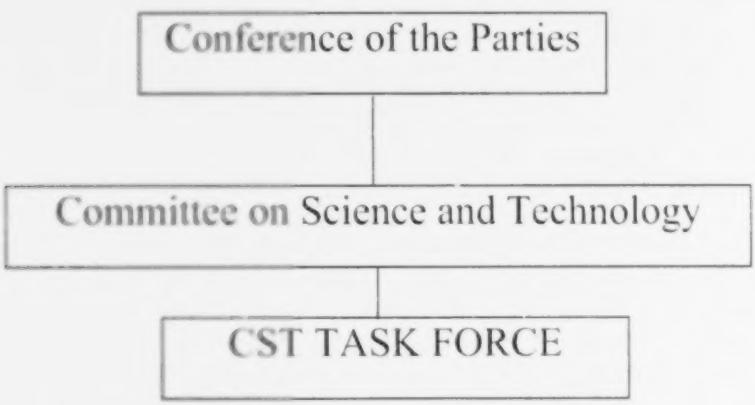
5. EUROPEAN UNION

Based on decision 17/COP.4, Parties have been encouraged to hold extensive consultations on ways of improving the efficiency and effectiveness of the CST, and have been requested to transmit their recommendations to the secretariat by 4 June 2001. The European Union would like to recommend the following:

(a) CST reform can and should be undertaken within the present mandate and terms of reference of the CST. There is, however, a need for change of the manner in which the CST performs its mandate.

Thus, it is essential that the output from CST be freely and publicly made available in the form of specific (thematic) reports. The CST is now asking Parties for more information on scientific and technological aspects of implementation, to be incorporated in the national reports. The reformed CST should look for further possibilities to collect and analyse this information. Additionally, the reformed CST would further improve and strengthen its contribution to the review of the implementation of the Convention.

(b) A CST task force should be established to oversee and coordinate issues within its mandate in order to coordinate the work of the ad hoc panels and prepare for the COP, thus allowing for a deeper scientific and technological approach to the relevant subjects. This task force should be composed of the sum total of the ad hoc panels and hence constitute some 30 representatives. Two co-chairpersons should be elected to serve the task force. Each panel should identify a coordinator to collect and disseminate the information. The Convention already foresees the ad hoc panels and since the task force will be constituted by members of the ad hoc panels there is no need for any change of the mandate and terms of reference of the CST.



composed of four panels with a specific task each:

(A) KNOWLEDGE	(B) IMPACT	(C) MITIGATION	(D) RESULTS

(c) Work in the current ad hoc panels is sector and/or issue oriented. The work of these panels should be streamlined through a process approach in four stages, for example applicable knowledge (A), impacts (B), mitigation (C) and results (D). The selected members of individual ad hoc panels must together be proficient in the four stages.

Work done by panel members can be easily and effectively coordinated using electronic means, thus allowing for a continuous process with occasional meetings only to discuss progress.

Ad hoc panels should be small (five/six persons) and deal with specific issues, the result of which should be presented in a public report through the task force and the COP, following the four-stage process approach (as applicable).

Membership of panels will continue through regional representation. Members would be expected to demonstrate the necessary commitment to provide an active scientific and practically orientated contribution to the task force. Such a process will limit the number of participants to a manageable number. There may also be a need for an update/revision of the roster of experts in line with the above.

Streamlined process approach in four stages

Current ad hoc panels	(A) Applicable knowledge	(B) Impacts	(C) Mitigation	(D) Results
1. Benchmarks and indicators	Applicable	Not applicable	Not applicable	Applicable
2. Traditional knowledge	Applicable	Applicable	Applicable	Applicable
3. Early warning systems	Applicable	Applicable	Not applicable	Applicable
4. Land degradation	Applicable	Applicable	Applicable	Applicable

The above proposal for a reformed CST would enhance its efficiency. The current budget allocation should be sufficient for the reformed CST activities.

6. GROUP OF 77 AND CHINA

By decision 17/COP.4 on improving the efficiency and effectiveness of the Committee on Science and Technology, the fourth session of the Conference of the Parties in operative paragraph 1 "encourages the Parties to hold extensive consultations on ways of improving the efficiency and effectiveness of the Committee on Science and Technology, and to transmit their recommendations, which should not exceed five pages in length, to the secretariat by 1 May 2001".

In accordance with the provisions of the decision, Parties should provide recommendations on ways of improving the efficiency and effectiveness of the Committee on Science and Technology (CST). To do so, the Group of 77 and China would like to consider the issue as follows:

- Role and functions of the CST;
- Status of CST work;
- Objectives of improving the efficiency and effectiveness of the CST;
- How to improve the work of the CST.

Roles and functions of the CST

(a) Role

Consistent with the provisions of the UNCCD, particularly article 24, the role of the CST is:

- To provide the Conference of the Parties with information and advice on scientific and technological matters relating to combating desertification and mitigating the effects of drought; and

- To ensure that its decisions are based on the most up to date scientific knowledge.

(b) Functions

The functions of the CST include the following:

- Advisory functions;

- Data and information functions;

- Research and review function;

- Functions related to technology;

- Evaluation functions.

Status of the CST work

From COP 1 (1997) to COP 4 (2000) the Parties, in general, seem to not be fully satisfied by the work done by the CST. Several issues and difficulties have been raised. The most important are:

- Participants to the sessions of the CST are not, in majority, highly competent in the relevant fields of expertise required;

- Discussions inside the Committee are often more political than scientific and technological;

- Representatives are not, in general, the same persons from one session to another session;

- Time allocated to consider the agenda of each session of the Committee is short to allow deep analysis and debates.

In this context, it is difficult for the Committee to fulfil its mandate and contribute effectively to the implementation of the UNCCD with scientific and technological data and tools.

Objectives of improving the efficiency and effectiveness of the CST

The objectives of improving the efficiency and effectiveness of the CST should be:

- To involve more well known or independent experts and scientists in the CST's work, and which are competent in the relevant fields of expertise needed to combat desertification and/or mitigate the effects of drought;

- To identify new scientific and technological approaches for consideration of items on the agenda of the CST;

- To launch specialized research on the scientific and technological tools necessary to implement the Convention;

- To ensure that decisions, studies and other works of the CST are based on the most up to date scientific knowledge.

How to improve the work of the CST

The best way to improve the efficiency and the effectiveness of the Committee on Science and Technology is to establish in parallel to the Committee, a high-level experts and scientists group on desertification and drought.

The establishment of such a high-level experts and scientists group on desertification and drought should be guided by the following elements:

(a) Composition

The group shall be composed of no more than thirty-two (32) well known experts and scientists at national, subregional, regional or international levels competent in the relevant fields of expertise. Due regard shall be paid to the need to ensure equitable geographical distribution and adequate representation of affected country Parties.

The distribution among the five regional groups should be as follows:

Africa	8
Asia	7
Latin America and the Caribbean	6
Western Europe and other States	6
Eastern and Central Europe	5

(b) Nomination

The secretariat will receive the nominees of the governments for the membership of the Body, nominated on the basis of their personal capacity, and draw from the roster of independent experts and scientists with expertise and experience in the relevant fields, and will provide the regional groups with the Curricula Vitae, for their consideration and subsequent decision.

It is advisable to select, from each regional group, at least one expert or scientist from civil society, in particular from NGOs.

(c) Mandate

Under the authority of the CST, the high-level experts and scientists group on desertification and drought will provide the necessary expertise in the scientific, technological, technical and other relevant fields, which will contribute or help to fully and effectively implement the Convention.

Well-defined terms of reference of the group will be formulated by the CST and submitted for adoption to the plenary of COP 5 in October 2001.

(d) Organization of work

The group shall meet at least once a year, before the ordinary sessions of the Conference of the Parties. The group should be encouraged to use more innovative means of communication for exchange of information and to minimize the need for face-to-face meetings.

The group will submit the reports of its work to the CST for consideration and approval before adoption by the COP plenary.

In this regard the CST, in the framework of its advisory functions will, inter alia:

- Summarize and, where necessary, convert the latest international scientific, technological, technical, socio-economic and other information provided by the high-level experts and scientists group on desertification and drought, into forms appropriate to the needs of the Conference of the Parties;

- Compile and synthesize regularly scientific, technological, technical, and socio-economic information and data on the global situation or status of desertification and drought provided by the high-level experts and scientists group on desertification and drought as well as on the latest developments in science and technology, to the extent possible, and assess the implications thereof for the implementation of the Convention; and formulate concrete requests through the COP, to competent international scientific and technical or technological bodies.

(e) Financial aspects

The financial implications of the meetings of the group should be reflected in the regular budget of the Convention. But, all efforts should be made to provide adequate voluntary financial assistance/contribution for the participation of experts and scientists from developing countries to the group's meetings.

Conclusion

Based on results and recommendations from meetings and consultations to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the CST, COP 5 should adopt a decision establishing a high-level experts and scientists group on desertification and drought in order to support and contribute to improve the work of the CST.

The high-level experts and scientists group should begin its work in 2002. To do so the nomination of experts and scientists should be done just after COP 5, and no later than March 2002.

The Group of 77 and China hope that the improvement of the work of the CST, through the establishment of a high-level experts and scientists group on desertification and drought, will have a positive impact in the implementation of the Convention by affected developing country Parties.

7. SWITZERLAND

(a) Changed terms of reference for CST

According to article 24 of the Convention, the CST is "... to provide it (the COP) with information and advice on scientific and technological matters relating to combating desertification and mitigating the effects of drought" and "the COP shall decide, at its first session, on the terms of reference of the Committee".

The CST has discussed various important strategic and technological aspects concerning desertification, however, without much response. Especially the crucial issue of the establishment and use of benchmarks and indicators in order to be able to monitor the implementation of the Convention was not taken up by the majority of the countries. The impact potential of the CST with its present terms of reference is therefore questionable. Due to the particular socio-economic pertinence of combating desertification, the issue of technology does not, in our opinion, get relevant until on a very high level, being the global level, such as for example remote sensing or the level of policy research. The first issue does not really fit into the mission of the CST, as the Parties have little to carry home for the implementation of their national action programmes. To discuss technology in a political environment does not make much sense, when the implementation is often jeopardized by lacking capacities on a national level. Issues on policy research, however, are probably the only ones that have a similar relevance to all countries, suitable to be addressed in this political environment of a COP. Switzerland therefore suggests to reorient the CST in its present composition, for example a political representation of each party, to be a policy research body, advising Parties to take

particular policy issues identified during the reporting and give support in various desertification-related fields of activities. The CST will have a shorter agenda and finish its work during the COP in one or one and a half days maximum. Questions related to technologies shall not be taken into consideration any more.

The CST operates as of per today, for example with a regional representation of all Parties, and an agenda of identifying solutions and issues that are presented during the COP in a "more scientific conference and workshop manner", drawing conclusions presented to each COP in terms of policy change and best experiences.

(b) Role of ad hoc panels

Article 24 of the Convention underlines that the COP "may, as necessary, appoint ad hoc panels to provide it, through the Committee of Science and Technology, with information and advice on specific issues regarding the state of the art in the fields of science and technology ...".

In a new policy function of the CST, the ad hoc panels will get redundant as policy research will be contracted out to institutions with relevant experience, such as the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI), the International Institute for Environment and Development (IIED), the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) or others, if the need to have a profound advice is identified.

(c) Create an independent scientific panel

The need to keep a scientific body of some kind is important in order to have a thorough observation of the implementation of the Convention from a critical and independent angle. Therefore, an independent panel that meets outside the COP should be established and act as a scientific monitoring and advocacy body. Parties and regional representations are not important and composition of the panel is independent from Parties, and should be open to all scientists that have a relevant competence. Such a panel should meet prior to the COP and be an international conference on scientific exchange of topics to be defined. The panel shall make a report to the press and the COP on relevant topics as well as facilitating the publication of reports and research results, relevant to the global community.

UNITED NATIONS

Convention to Combat Desertification

Distr.
GENERAL

ICCD/COP(5)/3/Add.3
21 August 2001

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES
Fifth session
Geneva, 1-12 October 2001
Item 7(e) of the provisional agenda

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CONVENTION

REVIEW OF AVAILABLE INFORMATION REGARDING THE FINANCING OF CONVENTION IMPLEMENTATION BY MULTILATERAL AGENCIES AND INSTITUTIONS, INCLUDING INFORMATION ON THE ACTIVITIES OF THE GLOBAL ENVIRONMENT FACILITY CONCERNING DESERTIFICATION THAT RELATE TO ITS FOUR FOCAL AREAS, AS SPECIFIED IN ARTICLE 20, PARAGRAPH 2 (b) OF THE CONVENTION

Note by the secretariat

Addendum

CONTENTS

		Paragraphs	Page
I.	INTRODUCTION	1 - 6	2
II.	BACKGROUND	7 - 17	3
III.	A NEW DEVELOPMENT REQUIRING APPROPRIATE ORIENTATION	18 - 22	4
IV.	POSSIBLE ACTION BY THE FIFTH SESSION OF THE CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES TO THE UNCCD	23	5

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I. INTRODUCTION

1. By its decision 9/COP.1, the Conference of the Parties (COP) decided to include as standing items on its agenda, *inter alia*:

a) the review of the implementation of the Convention, and of its institutional arrangements, pursuant to article 22, paragraphs 2 (a) and 2 (b), and article 26, of the Convention;

b) the review of available information regarding the financing of Convention implementation by multilateral agencies and institutions, including information on the activities of the Global Environment Facility (GEF) concerning desertification that relate to its four focal areas, as specified in article 20, paragraph 2 (b) of the Convention.

2. Pursuant to the provisions contained in paragraphs 9 and 14 of decision 11/COP.1 on procedures for the communication of information and review of implementation, relevant organs, funds and programmes of the United Nations system, as well as other intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations are encouraged:

a) to provide information, as appropriate, on their activities in support of the preparation and implementation of action programmes under the Convention;

b) to report, at each session, on activities taken to assist action programmes of those affected developing country Parties reporting to the session.

3. By its decision 14/COP.1, the Conference of the Parties invited the Council of the GEF to report as appropriate to the COP on matters relating to the issue of land degradation.

4. By its decision 5/COP.4, the Conference of the Parties, recalling also its decisions 9/COP.1, 2/COP.2 and 4/COP.3 on its programme of work, 10/COP.1 on the review of the implementation of the Convention, 11/COP.1 on procedures for the communication of information and review of implementation, decided to include in the agenda of its fifth session, among other issues, the review of available information regarding the financing of Convention implementation by multilateral agencies and institutions, including information on the activities of the Global Environment Facility concerning desertification that relate to its four focal areas, as specified in article 20, paragraph 2 (b) of the Convention.

5. Furthermore, based on decision 5/COP.4 and on the recent decision taken by the last GEF Council held in Washington DC in May 2001, the present document reports to the Conference of the Parties on the latest developments under this agenda item.

6. The decisions taken and actions suggested by the GEF Council during its May 2001 meeting constitute a follow-up to the decision passed at its November 2000 meeting, which requested the Chief Executive Officer to explore the best options for enhancing the support of the GEF in assisting affected countries, especially those in Africa, to implement the United Nations Convention to Combat

Desertification, taking into account the third replenishment of the GEF. This report also presents a scenario of the new developments as well as suggestions on possible action by the COP.

II. BACKGROUND

7. In his message to the fourth session of the Conference of the Parties to the UNCCD, the Secretary-General of the United Nations stated, "This Convention needs a financial mechanism, like the one the international community has already provided for its two sister conventions, those on Climate Change and Biological Diversity, and now also for the new Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants, which has just been negotiated in Johannesburg." A similar message was conveyed to the GEF Council, through the Chief Executive Officer, by Mr. Harri Holkeri, President of the 55th session of the General Assembly, who stated that for so long this Convention has lacked adequate and predictable financial resources. In this regard, the President reiterated his hope that the General Assembly would lend its full support to the process leading to the GEF being the financial mechanism of the UNCCD.

8. The GEF Council decided at its November 2000 session to request its Chief Executive Officer to explore options for strengthening the support of the GEF for the implementation of the UNCCD. The Assistant Chief Executive Officer of the GEF informed the fourth session of the Conference of the Parties about this decision and the steps that were being undertaken to implement it.

9. The fourth session of the Conference of Parties, in its decision 9/COP.4, welcomed the ongoing collaboration between the GEF and the UNCCD and requested the Executive Secretary of the UNCCD to report to the fifth session of the Conference of the Parties on the follow-up to the GEF Council decision.

10. Pursuant to the November 2000 GEF Council decision, the GEF Chief Executive Officer consulted the UNCCD Executive Secretary on the best options for supporting the implementation of the Convention.

11. This dialogue focused on the policy rationale for providing the UNCCD with predictable and significant financial support, in view of the importance of desertification as a global environmental issue and its close interlinkages with the other global issues under GEF financial tutelage. It also assessed the lack of effectiveness of the indirect approach pursued so far by the GEF as provided for in its instrument, of linking land degradation to three of its focal areas. This evaluation revealed that under this modality the allocation of GEF resources for the support of UNCCD implementation was insignificant when compared to its support for the other global environmental issues.

12. Two alternatives were explored by the GEF as being viable to enhance its support to the UNCCD:

a) Strengthening the modality of land degradation activities linked to existing focal areas addressing the issue of land degradation in arid and semi-arid zones, by establishing specific sub-envelopes within the biodiversity, climate change and international waters portfolio; or

b) Designating combating desertification as a focal area of the GEF so that the GEF could become its principal financial mechanism, providing it with a predictable and well-funded mechanism under the authority of the COP of the Convention, as is the case with the CBD and UNFCCC conventions.

13. The GEF secretariat presented to the May 2001 meeting of the GEF Council a paper entitled Options to Enhance GEF Support for the Implementation of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification.

14. The Council of the GEF fully recognized that addressing the issue of land degradation is an integral part of the pursuit of sustainable development, poverty alleviation and synergies amongst the global environmental conventions. Consequently, the Council of the GEF agreed that the designation of land degradation (desertification and deforestation) as a GEF focal area should be pursued as a means for enhancing GEF support for the successful implementation of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification.

15. The Council requested the GEF secretariat, in collaboration with the GEF implementing and executing agencies, the secretariat and the Global Mechanism of the UNCCD, to prepare a more detailed note elaborating upon the modalities for such a designation for consideration at the Council meeting in December 2001. The note should also address the steps necessary for preparing an amendment to the instrument for approval at the second GEF Assembly in October 2002.

16. The Council expressed strong support for strengthening the efforts of the GEF to finance activities addressing land degradation (desertification and deforestation), and it agreed that these efforts should be enhanced while continuing the pursuit of the designation of land degradation as a focal area of the GEF.

17. The Council noted that GEF activities to address land degradation need to be integrated in national development policies and national planning. The paper for the next Council, to be prepared in consultation with the UNCCD secretariat and other parties, should therefore explore, *inter alia*, how GEF assistance can produce maximum impacts on the ground while leading to global environmental benefits.

III. A NEW DEVELOPMENT REQUIRING APPROPRIATE ORIENTATION

18. The agreement by the Council to designate land degradation as a GEF focal area in order to enhance GEF support to the implementation of the UNCCD, and the eventual amendment of the GEF Instrument for this purpose, brings a new impetus to the implementation of the Convention. Final decision by the GEF Council and approval by its Assembly would open a predictable and well-funded financial envelope that would be directly linked to the Convention. It would also provide significant resources to enable affected developing country Parties to the Convention to fulfil their obligations under the UNCCD.

19. This new situation would enable a more strategic and clear-cut focus on the standardized and concerted actions which are required to implement the UNCCD.

20. Recognizing that the fundamental objective of the GEF Council decision to designate land degradation as a focal area is to enhance GEF support for the successful implementation of the Convention, it is recommended that appropriate orientation instruments are agreed to between the COP of the UNCCD and the GEF Council in order to ensure that the activities to be financed are in full conformity with the policies, strategies and programme priorities established by the COP as the governing body of the Convention.

21. Article 21 of the UNCCD provides, *inter alia*, that "the Conference of the Parties shall promote the availability of financial mechanisms and shall encourage such mechanisms to seek to maximize the availability of funding for affected developing country Parties, particularly those in Africa, to implement the Convention". In view of the forthcoming amendment of the GEF Instrument to incorporate land degradation (desertification and deforestation) as a focal area for the successful implementation of the UNCCD, the COP may wish to recognize and establish the GEF as the principal financial mechanism of the Convention.

22. The COP may also wish to orient the eligibility criteria to be used by the GEF to support activities relating to the implementation of the UNCCD as well as a periodic determination of funding resources, to enable appropriate planning for the implementation of the Convention priorities. In this regard the COP would provide the Council of the GEF, in anticipation of its replenishment exercise, with an assessment of the funding needed to assist affected developing country Parties in implementing the Convention.

IV. POSSIBLE ACTION BY THE FIFTH SESSION OF THE CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES TO THE UNCCD

23. The Conference of the Parties, having reviewed the report by the Executive Secretary on the GEF decisions concerning assistance to the implementation of UNCCD, may wish to request the Executive Secretary:

a) to undertake the appropriate consultations with the GEF secretariat on its behalf, with a view to developing, among others, a memorandum of understanding between the Conference of the Parties to the UNCCD and the GEF Council, regarding the support of the GEF to the implementation of the Convention, in full conformity with the policies, strategies and priorities agreed by the Parties;

b) to ensure that this memorandum of understanding recognizes the GEF as a principal financial mechanism for the implementation of the UNCCD, as per article 21 of the Convention, and to explore modalities for anticipating funding needs, and for defining the focal area envelope in advance of the GEF replenishment, as well as for defining provisions for periodic reporting, monitoring and evaluation of the GEF support, bearing in mind that the financing of enabling activities, as well as the provision of catalytic funding for priority activities, should occupy a central role in the GEF window to support the implementation of the UNCCD;

c) to closely follow-up, and report to the sixth session of the Conference of the Parties on all actions leading to the furtherance of the May 2001 GEF Council decision and the eventual amendment of the GEF Instrument to specify its support to the implementation of the UNCCD.

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